

THE ARGOSY.

JANUARY, 1875.

A SECRET OF THE SEA.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "IN THE DEAD OF NIGHT."

CHAPTER I.

IN THE LAWYER'S OFFICE.

IT was a December morning, clear and frosty. The timepiece in the office of Matthew Kelvin, attorney-at-law, Pembroke, Hertfordshire, racing noisily after the grave old Abbey clock which had just done chiming, pointed to the hour of ten. With his back to the welcome fire, and turning over yesterday's *Times* with an air of contemptuous indifference, stood Mr. Podley Piper—whose baptismal name was universally shortened into "Pod"—a short, thickset young gentleman of the mature age of fifteen. His nose was a pure specimen of a pug, and his short scrubby hair was of a colour sufficiently pronounced to earn him the nickname of "Carrot Pod" from sundry irreverent small boys of his acquaintance. His nose and his hair notwithstanding, Pod was a keen, bright-looking lad, with an air of shrewdness and decision about him by no means common in one of his age.

"Awfully dry reading—the *Times*," muttered Pod, tossing the paper on Mr. Kelvin's desk. "Only one suicide, and not a single murder in it. It's not worth buying. And yet there must be something in it, or so many people wouldn't read it. I suppose that by the time I'm fifty, and wear creaky shoes and carry a big gold watch in my fob, and have to count my hairs every morning to see that I haven't lost one overnight,—I suppose, when that time comes, I shall think as much of the *Times* as Sir Thomas Dudgeon does. But just at present I'd rather read the 'Bounding Wolf of the Prairies.'"

Hardly were the last words out of Pod's mouth, when the inner door opened, and Matthew Kelvin walked silently into the room. In silence he sat down at his desk, after one sharp glance at Pod and another at the fire, and set to work at once at the task immediately

before him. This task was the opening of the pile of post letters which had been placed ready to his hand by Pod. A brief glance at the contents of each was generally sufficient. In very few cases did he trouble himself to read a letter entirely through. Three or four of the more important documents were put aside to be attended to specially by himself; the rest of them had a corner turned up on which Pod pencilled down in shorthand Mr. Kelvin's instructions for the guidance of Mr. Bray, his chief clerk. It was his cleverness at shorthand that had gained Pod his present situation.

"That will do," said Mr. Kelvin, after a few minutes of this sharp work. "Give those papers to Mr. Bray, and tell him not to come in till I ring."

Something out of the ordinary way was evidently the matter with Mr. Kelvin this morning. After making one or two futile attempts to read over for the second time, and more carefully than before, the letters left behind by Pod, he gave up the attempt as a bad job. "I don't feel as if I could settle down to anything this morning," he said. "And no wonder. How well the secret has been kept! Even I had not the remotest suspicion of such a thing. What a strange example of the irony of events that I, of all men in the world, should have to break these tidings to Eleanor! What will my proud beauty say when I tell her? I could never have devised so exquisite a revenge. And yet it is not my hand that will drag her down. It is the hand of Jacob Lloyd that smites her from out his grave."

He fell into a reverie which lasted till he was disturbed by a knock at the door. "Come in," he said mechanically, and the head of Pod was thrust into the room.

"A lady to see you, sir. Says her name is Miss Deane."

"Olive Deane!" said Mr. Kelvin, in surprise. "Show her in."

Matthew Kelvin at this time was thirty-five years old. He was a handsome, large-nosed man, with full grey eyes and rather prominent teeth. He was already partially bald; but what hair he had left was carefully trimmed and parted down the middle, while his bushy dark brown whiskers showed no traces of age. He always dressed well, and was very particular as to his boots and gloves and the cut of his trousers. He had studied the art of dress as carefully as he had studied many other things, and the result was a success.

For his inferiors and those in his employ, Mr. Kelvin had a brusque, imperious manner that was not unmingled with a sort of hard contemptuousness. For his rich clients and those above him in the social scale, he had a pleasant, smiling, *dégagé* style, which sat upon him so easily and naturally that it was impossible to doubt its genuineness. To such people he was a man who never seemed to have much to do beyond trimming the nails of his very white hands, and sniffing at the choice flowers in his button-hole, and now and then dashing off his

signature at the foot of some document which he never seemed to be at the trouble of reading.

Yet no one ever seemed to doubt Matthew Kelvin's ability in his profession, unprofessional as he was—judged by the ordinary types of provincial lawyers—in many of his ways and doings. But, then, he was a sort of second cousin to Sir Frederick Carstairs of Wemley, and that perhaps made some difference. Many people thought it did, for the Carstairs were a very old family; and where's the use of having good blood in one's veins unless it declares itself in some shape or other?

Mr. Kelvin was fond of hunting, and subscribed liberally to the Thorndale pack. Few faces were more familiar in the field than his, and he was always nominated as one of the stewards of the Hunt Ball. Having a good voice, and being fond of singing, it was only natural that he should be a member of the Pembridge Catch Club; besides this, he was chairman of the Literary Institute. One winter he gave a couple of lectures on "Some Recent Discoveries in Astronomy," with illustrative drawings by himself: while on more than one occasion he had treated the whole of the workhouse children to an Orrery or a Panorama, and even to that wicked place—the Circus.

Matthew Kelvin lived with his mother, in the house where he had been born. His father had been dead some twelve years when we first make his acquaintance. The business had come down from his grandfather, who had been the first Matthew Kelvin known in Pembridge.

Perhaps the finest trait in Matthew's character was his love and reverence for his mother, who had been more or less of an invalid for many years. For her sake, when she was ill, and hungered for his presence by her bedside, he would give up his most pressing engagements, and sit by the hour together reading novels to her—a class of literature to which he rarely condescended at other times. Mrs. Kelvin, who was a sensible, clear-sighted woman enough in the ordinary affairs of life, still cherished a strange preference for the milk-and-water novels and vapid romances of the Minerva Press school, such as had been fashionable when she was a girl; and it was pleasant to see her son reading out this rubbish to her with the gravest air possible, hiding his contempt and weariness under a well-feigned interest in the fortunes and misfortunes of some book-muslin heroine, or some hero with chiselled features who was never anything less than a lord in disguise.

Of such books as these Mrs. Kelvin never seemed to tire. It may be that they carried her back for a little while to the days of her youth, when she too was young and blooming; and that when buried in their pages she forgot for a brief hour or two that she was nothing now but a grey-haired woman—old, sickly, and a widow.

There were people still alive in Pembridge, to whom the one romantic episode in the life of Barbara Kelvin was known in all its details. It was this:—The present Matthew Kelvin's father had run away with

A Secret of the Sea.

and married Miss Barbara Carstairs, an orphan niece of the late Sir Frederick Carstairs of Wemley, one of the chief magnates for twenty miles round. Miss Carstairs, to be sure, had not a penny that she could call her own, and was living the life of a genteel dependent at Wemley, when young Kelvin—who was passing backwards and forwards between Sir Frederick and his father, in connection with certain law business—persuaded her to elope. But the fact that Miss Carstairs' sole earthly possessions consisted of the clothes on her back and a solitary spade guinea in her purse, by no means lessened the magnitude of the offence of which the audacious young lawyer had been guilty. There was an outcry of horror, accompanied by a turning up of eyes and a holding up of hands, as the news spread from one country house to another; but nothing could be done save to excommunicate the late Miss Carstairs, with "bell, book, and candle," and try to forget that any such creature had ever had an existence.

Whether, when the romance of girlhood was over, Mrs Kelvin ever regretted that she had forgotten the obligations of caste in order to become the wife of a provincial lawyer, was a fact best known to herself; but if any such regret ever made itself felt at her heart, it never found expression at her lips. Her husband was fond of her and never stinted her in any way, and her life, quiet though it was, was not without its consolations. It was surely well to have a husband and a home, and to be the recognized leader of middle-class Pembridge society. Like a sensible woman, she made the best of her position. She had her little re-unions, her Tuesdays, when everybody that was worth knowing in Pembridge met in the little drawing-room over her husband's office, and where her simple hospitalities were dispensed with a grace and refinement that would have done no discredit to Wemley itself. But all those things now belonged to the past. At the time we make Mrs. Kelvin's acquaintance she had seen her sixtieth birthday, and was a confirmed invalid.

This home of the Kelvins for three generations was a substantially-built red-brick house that dated from the era of the second George. It was not in the Pembridge main street, but formed one of a dozen houses similar to itself in a short retired street that opened out of the busier thoroughfare. It was the kind of house that—if houses could do such things—you would naturally expect to shrink into its foundations with horror, if ever compelled to have for its next-door neighbour anything so vulgar as a shop. The massive front door, with its lion's head knocker, opened into a good-sized entrance-hall, at the far end of which was a tiny glass-fronted den sacred to the use of Mr. Piper; from which coign of vantage that ingenuous youth could see everybody who came in or went out, could tell this person to wait or usher that one into his master's office, and answer all inquiries; and could furthermore refresh himself by keeping up a guerilla warfare of repartee and chaff with the

clerks as they passed into or out of their office. On the left as you entered from the street was the door which opened into Matthew Kelvin's private office. On the right hand were, first, the door which opened into the clerks' office, and, secondly, the door of a waiting-room. Beyond these was a door which opened on to a private staircase. The real entrance to the private part of the house was down a covered passage at the side. Such passages were by no means infrequent in Pembridge. Many of the best houses in the place opened, not from the street, but from these side entries. Behind the house was an extensive piece of garden ground, containing fruit trees and rustic seats, and any quantity of old-fashioned sweet-smelling flowers such as our grandfathers and grandmothers dearly loved, but which look so dreadfully out of place in these days of riband-gardening and floral mathematics.

"Why, who on earth expected to see you?" said Mr. Kelvin, as he shook hands heartily with Miss Deane.

"Not you, I daresay, Matthew," answered Miss Deane, with a blush and a little sigh, as she looked straight into his handsome face.

"Why not I as much as anyone?" queried her cousin with a smile, as he placed a chair for her at no great distance from his own. "You always were fond of change, Olive."

She smiled again, a little bitterly. "Why don't you add—like all my sex?"

"Because I was speaking to one of your sex. Had I been talking to a man, I should probably have used those very words. Olive, I'm really glad to see you, whether you come holiday-making, or whether you come because you have left Lady —— Lady ——?"

"Lady Culloden. Yes, I have left her. I grew tired of my situation. Sights innumerable: one petty insult after another: my position not properly recognised: till at last I felt that I must speak my mind or die. I did speak my mind, and in a way that her ladyship is not likely to forget. We parted. I felt a longing to see Pembridge and my old friends. I wanted to see my aunt —— and you."

"You know that you are always sure of a welcome here."

"But my aunt—how is she?" asked Miss Deane.

"No better, I am sorry to say; neither do I see much prospect of her ever being so. She is confined very much to her own room."

"Poor dear aunt! I am very very sorry to hear that she is no better. Does she keep up her good spirits?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Kelvin; "her spirits are, as they have always been, something wonderful."

"I believe, Matthew, that I love her better than I ever loved my own mother."

"No one can know my mother without liking her," he returned.

"And then what a gentlewoman she is!" said Olive. "There is as

much difference between her and Lady Culloden as there is between a flower cut out of a turnip and a real camellia."

Olive Deane at this time was twenty-eight years old. The money which her mother—a sister of the second Matthew Kelvin—had taken as a dowry to her husband had soon been squandered in wild speculations, and it had been impressed upon Olive's mind, almost from the time when she could remember anything, that she would have to earn her own living; and she started with that idea the very first day she went to school. Her mother died when she was ten years old, and her father when she was fifteen; and from the latter age till now she had been altogether dependent on her own exertions for her daily bread. The Kelvins would gladly have assisted her, both then and subsequently, but the girl would accept no help. She went out as nursery governess in the first instance, and had gone on, step by step, till she could now command her ninety or hundred guineas a year as finishing governess in families of distinction. Olive Deane had taken to teaching as naturally as a duck takes to water. She had had five years at a really good French school before her father's death, but everything else she owed to her own love of knowledge and indomitable perseverance. The wasteful extravagance of which she had been a witness when a child at home had not been without its effect upon her. She grew up thrifty, self-denying, economical in every way; and now, at twenty-eight years of age, she was mistress of four hundred pounds, which her cousin Matthew had advantageously invested for her in Pembridge gas shares.

Olive's sole recreation was a visit now and then to the theatre. A classical play of the sterling old school, she delighted in. She was an omnivorous reader. Anything, from a French novel to the last philosophical essay, had an interest for her. To learn: to know: was all she asked. The quality of the knowledge mattered little or nothing. Wherever she might be, she generally contrived to have half an hour's reading of the *Times*, to keep herself *au courant* with the chief political movements of the day. She had a clear hard masculine intellect, with no sentimental nonsense about it, as her cousin Matthew often declared—and he was a great admirer of Olive: in fact, he had been heard to say that if Olive had been a man he would have made her his partner long ago.

Miss Deane was a little above the ordinary stature of her sex. She had a lithe, slender figure, and in all her movements she was graceful, easy, and self-possessed. She had clearly-cut, well-defined features, and many people would have called her handsome. But she certainly lacked colour. Her clear olive complexion—strangely in accordance with her name—was too clear and too colourless. Only on very rare occasions was its waxen pallor flushed through with the faintest tinge of red. She had magnificent eyebrows, and eyes of the darkest brown, that looked jet-black by candlelight, with a keen, watchful look in

them, begotten, perhaps, of the time when, little more than a child, she had to fight her way through the world and found a thorn or a pitfall at every step she took. Her hair, too, was black, but a dull, dead, lustreless black, without the slightest gloss of brightness in it, and very fine in quality. She almost invariably dressed in black, with white linen cuffs turned up from the wrist, and a white linen turn-down collar fastened with a simple bow of mauve or violet riband. No ear-rings, no brooch, no ornaments of any kind visible, except an inch of the gold chain that held her watch.

"I thought we should have heard the news of your wedding before now, Olive," said Mr. Kelvin.

"The news of my wedding, Matthew! You will never hear that."

"Never is a long word, Olive. Such a nice clever girl as you are can't be destined to live and die an old maid."

Olive's black eyebrows came together for a moment, and she tapped the floor impatiently with her foot.

"It almost seemed at one time, Olive, as if you and I would have come together," went on Kelvin, while his fingers toyed absently with a paper-knife. "Those were pleasant days—those old days on the sands at Redcar, when I was recovering from my sprain, and you did your best to nurse me. You used to read novels to me, and play to me on that vile old lodging-house piano; and out of gratitude I taught you cribbage and *écarté*. I have never enjoyed a holiday like that. Do you remember our long row by moonlight, and how we kissed as we stepped out of the boat on to the wet sands?"

No word from Olive: only a far-away look in her eyes, and the thin straight line of her lips looking thinner and straighter than before.

"And yet it all came to nothing!" resumed Kelvin, glancing carelessly at her. "It might have come to something: who knows? Only two hours later I was telegraphed for to London, and ——"

"And, as you say, Matthew," interrupted Olive, "it came to nothing. So much the better probably for both of us."

"Certainly so much the better for you, Olive, but whether or not for me may be open to doubt. Why, even in these old days that now seem so far away, when you and I were girl and boy together, how fond we were of each other! Do you remember that afternoon when the swing broke down and I pitched on my head, and how you cried over my bruises as if your heart would break?"

"I have not forgotten," said Olive in a low voice.

"Whenever I go into a chemist's shop it takes me back in memory to your father's little surgery. How cleverly you used to help him with his drugs and mixtures! You seemed to know the contents of every gallipot and bottle almost as well as he did. If you had been a man you would have been a doctor."

"Possibly so," said Olive.

"I remember when farmer Sinclair's dog bit you," continued Mr. Kelvin, "how bravely you bore the pain. The dog died a week after, and some people said you had poisoned it, but I scouted the idea."

"But I did poison the brute," replied Olive.

"You did!"

"Why not? It bit me in the wrist. I have the scar now. It was not fit to live."

Matthew Kelvin shrugged his shoulders, but did not rejoin.

"But why call up such reminiscences?" said Olive. "I want to hear about yourself. A rising man like you, Matthew—a man born to fight his way upward—how is it that you are still unmarried? A rich wife would do so much to help forward your ambitious schemes!"

"My ambitious schemes, indeed!" said Kelvin, with a sly twinkle in his eye. "What has a simple-minded country lawyer like me to do with ambition?"

"I know you too well, Matthew, not to feel sure that in ten years from this time you hope to be in a very different position."

Kelvin dropped the paper-knife with which he had been playing, and gazed steadily at his cousin for a moment before speaking. Her eyes met his unshrinkingly.

"You are right, Olive," he said, speaking gravely enough now. "I *do* cherish some strangely bold dreams. I *am* an ambitious man; but you are the only person who seems to have divined that fact. I am far richer than the world knows of; and, but that it would almost break my mother's heart, I should have given up the old business years ago. In any case I shall dispose of it before long. I can afford now to put it behind me. The first step in my ambition is to get into Parliament. —And so you think I ought to get married, eh?"

"Yes—to a woman who could help you forward in your career by sympathising with and comprehending the aims and objects of your ambition. No mere drawing-room doll must be your wife, but a woman fitted in heart and brain to be your companion."

"I won't say that you are not right," said Mr. Kelvin, "But in these matters men rarely do that which their friends think they ought to do. Cupid, you know, never went to school, and his problems cannot be worked out by rule-of-three."

"That may apply to a very young man, who lacks sense to know what is best for him and where to look for it; but not to you."

"That is just where you make a mistake, Olive. What will you say of my strength of mind—of my common sense—when I tell you that I have fallen in love with a simple country girl with nothing to recommend her save a pretty face and the finest eyes in the world?"

Olive Deane rose slowly to her feet. Her face grew whiter; her eyes blacker; her thick brows made a straight unbroken line across her forehead. If looks had power to slay, Mr. Kelvin would have been

annihilated on the spot. But his face was turned the other way. His own thoughts held him. He was gazing meditatively into the fire.

"And she—she accepted you, of course?" said Olive at last, her voice hardly raised above a whisper.

"On the contrary, she rejected me."

"How I hate her for it!" Then she added under her breath: "But I should have hated her worse if she had accepted him."

"You are the only person in the world, Olive, to whom I have breathed a word of this."

"Your confidence is safe with me, Matthew."

"I am sure of that, and it is a relief to me to talk to you. To you, Olive, I can always talk as to a sister."

"Yes—as to a sister," she said with a slow nod of the head. Then she shivered slightly, as if with cold, and held out her hands to the blaze. "Go on, Matthew. You are sure of my sympathy in any case."

"Need I tell you any more, Olive?"

"I want you to tell me all about the affair, from beginning to end. You have piqued my curiosity, and now you must satisfy it."

Kelvin paused for a moment or two as if to pull himself together. "It seems strange to take even you into my confidence," he said, "and yet I feel as if I must tell some one—especially after what happened yesterday. To begin, then: I fell in love with this girl, Eleanor Lloyd—madly, desperately, in love. Her father, Jacob Lloyd, was a well-to-do small landowner whose affairs I managed for him. He seconded my suit, but, as I have said already, the girl rejected me. I am a patient man. I waited six months, and then I spoke to Miss Lloyd again—spoke more warmly and strongly than a less infatuated man would have done. Again she rejected me, this time in a way that I can neither forget nor forgive. I vowed that I would some day humble her haughty pride—and that day has come. Six months ago Jacob Lloyd died without a will. He had been speculating greatly for years, and Eleanor Lloyd, much to her own surprise and that of everyone else, found herself an heiress to the amount of something over twenty thousand pounds. When I first knew this, I thought that the day of my revenge had gone by for ever. But I was wrong. Such was the state of affairs yesterday: to-day they are very different."

"In what way are they different to-day?"

"Listen. Yesterday there came into my hands certain documentary proofs, full and complete, of the truth of what I am now going to tell you. Eleanor Lloyd is not the daughter of Jacob Lloyd, nor any relation of his whatever. She is neither more nor less than a child adopted in infancy by him and his wife, they having no family of their own. The fortune left by Jacob Lloyd is the property of a nephew, Gerald Warburton, now living somewhere among the wilds of Ireland—and the woman who rejected me is an absolute pauper."

"A strange story: a very strange story, indeed, cousin Matthew!"

"Eleanor Lloyd has to come here two hours hence to sign certain deeds. She will enter this room a rich woman; she will leave it penniless!"

"And you will be revenged?"

"And I shall be revenged."

They were both silent, thinking their own thoughts.

"Where has she been living since the death of her father?" said Olive.

"She has been living very quietly at Bridgeley, her own home."

"But has it not been her intention to take up a position in society, such as her supposed wealth would entitle her to occupy?"

"Lady Dudgeon, the wife of one of our Pembridge magnates, has taken her by the hand and has constituted herself Miss Lloyd's chaperone. Eleanor is to accompany her ladyship to London in the spring, and will then make her debut."

"To how many people is Miss Lloyd's true parentage known?"

"Not a soul in the world knows of it except myself—and you."

"Good. And your idea of revenge is to break this news to Miss Lloyd suddenly—here—this very morning—and so crush her?"

"It is."

"A man's idea—poor and commonplace. Shall I tell you what mine—a woman's—idea of revenge would be in such a case?"

"You are a clever girl, Olive, and you pique my curiosity."

"Were I in your place, I would keep my discovery a profound secret for twelve months to come. I would let her, for twelve golden months, taste all the pleasures that wealth can confer. I would let her go on till a life of ease and self-indulgence should have become as it were a second nature to her. I would let her live on in blissful ignorance of the thunderbolt you have in store for her till she has learned to love—till she is engaged to be married."

"Eleanor married to another! I never thought of that," said Kelvin under his breath.

"Then, when you think the comedy has lasted long enough, you shall go to her some day when she is surrounded by her fine friends—on her wedding morning itself, if it so please you—and, touching her on the shoulder, you shall say to her: 'Eleanor Lloyd, you are a beggar!' Her fall from wealth to poverty will then seem infinitely greater than it would do now, and yours will be a revenge worthy of the name."

"A devilish scheme, Olive, and one which only an Italian—or a woman—would have thought of!"

"You flatter me," said Olive, with a little lifting of the shoulders, and the ghost of a smile playing round her thin lips.

To say that Mr. Kelvin was thoroughly startled by the proposition,

is to say no more than the truth. Olive was right. There would be a refinement—a subtlety—about such a scheme which his own altogether lacked. But, would it not be a mean and dastardly advantage to take of an innocent girl like Eleanor Lloyd? He got up from his chair and crossed to the window, and then walked slowly back again and sat down without a word. He was a man whom circumstances had never before tempted to step out of the beaten track of morality. The orthodox path had for him been paved with golden guineas. So far as he had seen, it was only reprobates who went astray, or were foolish enough to do anything which the general opinion of society condemned; simpletons, in fact, who could not understand that to do right—in a worldly point of view—was a far better paying game than to do the opposite. But Olive's words had found the weak place in his armour. His judgment did not fail him so utterly as to mislead him with regard to the meanness of what he meditated, but his own wishes and desires in the matter threw a sort of lime-light glamour over it, which made it seem something altogether different from what it really was.

"I'll do it, Olive," he said at last. "Yes; for good or for evil, I'll do it! I will crush her proud spirit to the dust. I will humiliate her as she humiliated me. She shall suffer as I suffered. I will repay scorn with scorn: insult with insult. At the moment of her greatest triumph I will strip her of love, of wealth, of friendship; and show her to the world for what she really is—a pauper and an outcast!"

"Bravely spoken, Matthew! Don't let her soft looks or winning ways melt you from your purpose," said Olive, as she pushed back her chair. "And now I will go upstairs to my aunt."

Kelvin had put his elbows on the table, and was resting his face in his hands. Olive stood looking down at him for a moment. There was a tear in the corner of her eye, but a smile played round her mouth. She went up to him and laid her hand gently on his shoulder. "I shall see you later in the day, shall I not?"

"Yes—later in the day," he answered, absently, without looking up.

Olive went: and presently Mr. Piper's head came in.

"Captain Dixon, sir, has sent for you. He's been taken ill and wants his will drawn up without delay."

Kelvin roused himself from his abstraction. "Another fool who has put off till the day of his death what he ought to have done years ago." He began to put his papers together, but still in an absent-minded way. "This is a damnable thing to do. I despise myself for promising to do it," he muttered. "And yet why should she not suffer? I have only to call to mind her words—her looks—that summer evening in the garden, when for the second time I pleaded my love before her: I have only to remember how she turned on me, as if I were a reptile, to feel my purpose harden within me, and every grain of pity melt out of my soul!"

CHAPTER II.

MISS BELLAMY.

THE place was Miss Bellamy's lodgings in Ormond Square, Bayswater, and the time eight p.m., on a frosty evening in mid-winter. The people were two: Miss Bellamy herself, and her guest, Mr. Gerald Warburton.

Miss Bellamy was forty-five years of age, but looked older. She was spare in person and lengthy in nose, but still retained considerable traces of former good looks. She wore her hair, which was fast turning grey, in three old-fashioned curls fastened down with combs on either side her face. She always wore silk in an afternoon, either brown or black—thick, rustling silk, made to wear and last, that would turn and dye, and then look nearly as good as new. Privately, Miss Bellamy used spectacles, but no one had ever seen her wear them except Eliza, the maid-of-all-work; and it was currently reported in the house that that young person had been bribed with two half-crowns never to divulge the terrible secret.

Gerald Warburton was a tall, dark-complexioned young fellow, some six or seven and twenty years old. He had a refined aquiline face, a pair of dark eyes, behind which a smile seemed always to be lurking, and black silky hair. He had an easy, lounging, graceful manner, more common among Frenchmen or Italians than among us stiff-necked islanders; but then, he had lived so much abroad that he could hardly be said to belong to one country more than another. He possessed the happy faculty of adapting himself with ease to whatever place or persons he might be associated with. Whether living among Laps and reindeer, or smoking the pipe of peace in an Indian wigwam, he made himself equally at home; and, what was still rarer, he made those with whom he happened to be feel that, for the time being, he was one of themselves. No Frenchman would have made a mistake as to his nationality, but in a walk down Regent Street or Pall Mall it is not improbable that half the people who noticed him would have set him down as a foreigner.

Just now he was employed, after a thoroughly English fashion, in the slow but sure consumption of a thoroughly English beefsteak. Occasionally he paused to refresh himself from the cup of fragrant tea at his elbow. Miss Bellamy sat opposite to him, looking on with admiring eyes. The more beefsteak he ate and the more tea he drank, the more Miss Bellamy admired him, from which we may conclude that she at least was thoroughly English. Gerald had just reached London after twenty-four hours of unbroken travelling.

"I wish I could induce you to take another lump of sugar in your tea," said Miss Bellamy. "I never think that you get the real flavour of the leaf without plenty of sugar to assist it."

A Secret of the Sea.

"There you must allow me to differ from you," said Gerald. "To put sugar in tea seems to me simply to spoil it." Miss Bellamy smiled and shook her head.

"Then you really have some faint recollection of having seen me when you were a child?" she said, after a pause.

"Yes, a very clear and distinct recollection of sitting on your knee and being fed with sugar plums."

"Ah, you are far too big now to care for sugar plums," said Miss Bellamy with a little sigh.

"Not at all too big. Only that I now require a different kind of sugar plum to keep me good, from those I cared for then."

"Why, you could not have been more than four years old!"

"I suppose that was about my age."

"And I never saw your poor dear mamma after that day!"

"I was just ten years old when I lost my mother," said Gerald, gravely.

"Four of us, there were, all bosom friends, and they called us the Four Graces in the little town where we were born and brought up; and now I am the only one that is left alive!" said Miss Bellamy, with a little quaver in her voice. "There was Ellen Barry: she married your uncle, Jacob Lloyd. Then there was Minna, Jacob's sister, who married your father. The third was Mary Greaves, who married Mr. Ambrose Murray. There seemed to be no husband left for me: but, thank Heaven, I have never felt the need of one!"

"It is never too late to make a change for the better," said Gerald, demurely, as he pushed away his plate.

"In my case it would have been for the worse. I should only have tormented some poor man's life out of him, and no one can lay that to my charge now."

As soon as Eliza had cleared the table, Miss Bellamy put a tiny copper kettle to simmer on the hob, and then produced a bottle of whiskey, a lemon, and the other materials necessary for brewing a glass of punch. From another cupboard she brought out a box of cigars, which she had made a special journey into the City to buy. Being no judge of such articles, or their cost, she had brought back a box of what Mr. Piper would have called "duffers."

"Snuff-taking among gentlemen is going quite out of fashion nowadays," said Miss Bellamy to herself. "But I've no doubt Gerald is fond of a cigar, and I'll not trouble about the curtains for once."

"You don't seem in the least curious about the news I've got to tell you," said Miss Bellamy at last.

"No, I'm very comfortable," said Gerald as he sipped his grog, "and I don't know that a man can wish to be more."

"And yet you have come all the way from the south of France to hear it?"

"And yet I have come all the way from France to hear it! But I daresay it will keep a little longer."

"Just your poor mother's careless way of looking at things," said Miss Bellamy with a smile and a shake of the head. "Just the same easy way that I remember so well." She gazed into the fire for a few moments, her mind far away among the things of the past.

"How long did you say that your father has been dead, Gerald?"

"A little more than two years."

"And no reconciliation ever took place between your uncle Jacob and him?"

"None whatever. My father knew he was in the wrong, and that only served to embitter him still more against my uncle. My uncle could neither forgive nor forget my father's cruel treatment of my mother. I believe that if a woman's heart was ever broken, hers was."

"Don't talk in that way, Gerald. You must not forget that the man was your father."

"Can I ever forget it?" said Gerald, bitterly. "You were my mother's friend, and I tell you distinctly that my father broke her heart. The bitterest tears that ever I shed, or that I ever can shed in this world, were those with which I mourned her loss."

"You left home soon afterwards, did you not?"

"I was thirteen years old when I ran away to sea. By that time my father's tyranny had become unendurable. One victim had eluded him by dying, but I was still left. On the morning of my birthday I left home to seek my fortune, my sole earthly possessions being four-and-sixpence in money, two ally-taws, an apple, and a thick slice of bread."

"But you saw your father again after that?"

"On two occasions only, and then only at an hotel where we met by appointment. Time had softened my bitterness against him, but not his against me. Had I been a dog at his feet he could hardly have treated me worse. Reconciliation on the terms proposed by him was impossible."

"Were you not with him when he died?"

"No. He died rather suddenly, and I was abroad at the time."

"But at least, he surely did not forget you in his will?"

"He left everything to different charities in the town where he died. There is some talk of erecting a statue to him."

"My poor boy! And how have you contrived to live, all these years?"

"As I best could; but all things considered, I have not done amiss. I stopped at sea till I was seventeen; then I got a situation as a storekeeper on a South American hacienda, and there I stayed till I was twenty. Growing tired of that, I set up a photographic apparatus and travelled some thousands of miles with it, earning my bread as I

went. Those were some of my happiest days. When I was of age, I came into possession of two hundred and fifty pounds a year, left me by my mother. Since that time I have lived chiefly on the Continent, pottering about among antiquities, buying now and again a bronze, a coin, or a tazza in a cheap market, and selling it in a dear one; writing at odd times an article for one or other of the magazines; having no settled home, leading a vagabond, Bohemian kind of existence, but by no means an unhappy one."

"You did hear that your uncle Lloyd was dead?"

"Quite by chance I saw the announcement in an English newspaper."

"And yet you never thought it worth your while to inquire whether he had remembered you in his will?"

"Knowing that he had a daughter, and that he had never seen me since I was six years old, it did not seem to me worth while to make any such inquiry."

"It might have been," said Miss Bellamy, drily. But Gerald said nothing.

"Your uncle died between seven and eight months ago," resumed Miss Bellamy. "I was away in Guernsey at the time, and did not hear of it till my return to London some seven weeks since. It was a great shock to me. Your aunt and I had been like sisters, and after her death the friendship between Mr. Lloyd and myself remained unbroken. It is only about eighteen months since I left Pembroke and came to reside in London; and up to that time I was a frequent visitor at Bridgeley, the place where he has lived for the last twenty years. Several years ago Mr. Lloyd put into my hands a sealed packet of papers, addressed to a certain person, and labelled 'not to be opened till after my death,' with a request that I should keep it till that event took place, and then forward it to the person to whom it was addressed. At the time that he placed the packet in my hands he told me of what the contents consisted. The chief document was a statement of certain events in his personal history which were already well known to me, and about which he and I had often talked. As already explained, I did not know of your uncle's death till six or seven weeks ago, consequently it was not till six months after that event that the packet I held could reach the person to whom it belonged. That person ought to have acted on the contents of the packet without a day's unnecessary delay. Seven weeks have gone by, and as yet he has taken no action in the matter. It is for that very reason that I sent you so imperative a summons to come to me here as quickly as possible."

Gerald stared across the table at Miss Bellamy as if he could hardly believe the evidence of his ears. "But in what possible way can all this affect me?" he asked.

"All this affects you very nearly indeed," answered Miss Bellamy. "Your uncle Lloyd had been a prudent man. When he was dead, it was discovered that he was worth something over twenty thousand pounds. He died without a will, and you are his heir-at-law."

"I my uncle's heir-at-law!" said Gerald, with a little laugh. "How can that be, my dear Miss Bellamy? You seem to forget that my uncle had a daughter."

"Your uncle had no daughter."

Gerald sat speechless for several seconds. "If my cousin Eleanor is dead, I certainly never heard of it."

"You never had a cousin Eleanor."

"My dear Miss Bellamy," said Gerald, "will you kindly run a pin into my arm, so that I may make sure I am not dreaming."

"You are not dreaming, Gerald Warburton. The young lady you have hitherto believed to be your cousin is no relation whatever to you, neither was she any relation to your uncle, Jacob Lloyd. She was simply his adopted daughter."

After hearing this startling news, Gerald's silence was not to be wondered at. He woke up like a man rousing himself from a dream. "You have all along known what you have just told me, Miss Bellamy?"

"Yes, I have known it all along. But to no one else was the secret ever imparted by your uncle and aunt. Eleanor was adopted by them when she was quite a little thing, and when they were living in a town more than two hundred miles away from Pembridge. For certain reasons, they gave her their own name. She never knew, she does not know now, that they were not really her parents. She loved them as such, and they could not have thought more tenderly of her had she been that which the world believed her to be. But Jacob Lloyd was not only a kind-hearted man: he was a just one. He shrank from revealing the truth to Eleanor while he was alive, but it was imperatively necessary, for certain reasons which I may one day explain to you, that she should become cognisant of everything after his death. Hence the sealed packet: which contains a duly authenticated statement of these facts in the fewest possible words."

"You take my breath away! There is nothing in the 'Arabian Nights' half so exciting," exclaimed Gerald.

"The one unfortunate feature of the case is this," resumed Miss Bellamy. "From what your uncle hinted to me at different times, I am perfectly convinced that it was his intention to provide very handsomely for Eleanor. Unfortunately he kept putting off the making of his will till it was too late. One morning he was found dead in his bed, and the girl whom he brought up and cherished as his own child is left an absolute beggar."

A tear stood in Miss Bellamy's eye, as she ceased speaking. "There

need be no trouble on that score," said Gerald, emphatically. "If, as you state, I am my uncle's heir, and the young lady, through an unwise oversight, has been left penniless, why, then, my duty lies clearly before me. Whatever may be the amount that will come to me from my uncle, whether it be a hundred pounds or twenty thousand pounds, this young lady, whom I cannot help looking upon as my cousin, is clearly entitled to half of it. And half of it she shall have as sure as my name is Gerald Warburton!"

"Don't make any rash promises, Gerald, in the heat of the moment. You may regret them afterwards."

"Such a promise as this I could never regret. I should indeed be base."

"It was certainly not in my province to send for you, and tell you all that you have just now heard," said Miss Bellamy, "and under other circumstances I should not have thought of doing so. The lawyer in whose hands was the management of Mr. Lloyd's affairs is the proper person to have communicated with you. He ought to have broken the news to Eleanor, and have communicated with you at the same time. The sealed packet has been in his hands for upwards of seven weeks, and, as yet, he has done neither one thing nor the other."

"May I ask how you come to know that he has not yet broken the news to Miss Lloyd?"

"Because I had a letter from Eleanor only three days ago, written from Stammers, the residence of Sir Thomas Dudgeon, where I find that she is visiting. She talks of coming to London with Lady Dudgeon very shortly, and says that her ladyship treats her quite as one of the family—proof positive that Eleanor is still living on in happy ignorance."

"Perhaps the lawyer did not know where to find me? Perhaps he has delayed breaking the news to Eleanor on that account?"

"No: I suspect that there is some other motive at the bottom of Matthew Kelvin's strange silence. He has sense enough to know that any letter addressed to you at Brexly would be sure to find you. He knows all about Brexly, and the quarrel between your father and Mr. Lloyd."

"Kelvin—Matthew Kelvin," said Gerald, musingly. "I seem to have heard that name before."

"You can readily understand why I have never breathed even the faintest suspicion of the truth to Eleanor. Such a revelation would be too painful for me to make to a person whom I have known and loved from a child. Therefore I have sent for you: and my advice is that you at once go down to Pembridge, see Mr. Kelvin, give him to understand that you know everything, and demand from him an explanation of his singular silence."

"Is this Mr. Kelvin aware that you have any knowledge of the real facts of the case?"

"No: I am convinced that he has no such knowledge."

"His silence certainly seems rather singular; but we shall probably find on inquiry that he has been ill, or away from home, or something of that sort."

Miss Bellamy shook her head. She was far from being convinced. "A clever schemer, but not to be trusted," she said, presumably with reference to Kelvin.

"But about this cousin who is no cousin—about Eleanor," said Gerald. "You know that I have never seen her. What is she like? Is she good-looking? Is she nice?"

"I don't know what you young gentlemen call nice," said Miss Bellamy. "I don't see young ladies with the eyes that you see them. Eleanor Lloyd is a dear, good girl; slightly impulsive, perhaps, but open and honest as the day—a girl that any man might be proud to call his wife."

Gerald pursed his lips a little. Miss Bellamy's outline was too vague to take his fancy. "A country-bred hoyden, evidently, with red cheeks and large hands, and a healthy appetite," he muttered to himself.

"There is one point that you have not enlightened me upon," he said presently. "But perhaps it is one on which I have no right to question you."

"Tell me what it is."

"You say that Eleanor, when an infant, was adopted by my uncle and aunt. She must have been somebody's child. You have not yet told me who and what her friends were."

Miss Bellamy's face became more grave and troubled than Gerald had yet seen it. "Pardon me," he said, "if I have unintentionally wounded your feelings."

"You have not wounded my feelings. You have only brought back the memory of a very old trouble. But, as I have told you so much, I see no reason why I should not tell you the remainder. You must learn the story sooner or later, and you had better hear it from my lips than from the lips of anyone else."

"I am so sorry——" began Gerald.

"Pray don't say another word. How were you to know?—Yes, Gerald Wainburton, I will tell you the story, painful though it be—but not now. You have heard enough to ponder over and dream about for one night. I shall just mix you one more glass, and then I shall send you off to bed."

CHAPTER III.

THE STORY OF THE MURDER.

GERALD Warburton had not been in London for some time, and two or three days passed quickly and pleasantly away in hunting up old acquaintances, and in seeing sights that he had never seen before. Besides which, he wanted a little time to familiarize himself with the thought of his new-found fortune. By nature and disposition, he was one of the least worldly of men, and the wandering life he had led for many years had tended to make him more impractical than he might otherwise have been. For money, as money, he cared nothing: nay, he told himself that he thoroughly despised it: but that was probably an exaggeration. He was one of those men who never think of saving—of putting away for a “rainy day,” as the phrase goes—and who never can save, not even when their incomes are doubled or trebled, unless some pressure of an extreme kind (a thrifty wife, for instance, who has a will of her own) is brought to bear upon them.

As a matter of course, despite all Gerald's impracticality, one of the most frequent thoughts in his mind just now—a thought turned over and over in his brain during his long solitary walks through London streets—was what he should do with the ten thousand pounds that was coming to him. He had quite made up his mind that the other ten thousand should be handed over to his cousin Eleanor, as he could not help still calling her to himself. Had anyone asked him a few days previously whether ten thousand pounds would have satisfied all his earthly wants from a monetary point of view, he would have laughed and answered that half that sum would satisfy his every wish. And yet, now, when so much money was really coming to him, it was quite remarkable what a long list of things that might almost be considered indispensable, he could count up in his mind. Instead of ten thousand, thirty or forty would be needed before he could get through even the first few pages of his mental catalogue.

But having got so far, Gerald was obliged to pull himself up suddenly. He called to mind that it was not ten thousand a year that he was coming into, but simply one sum of that value; and that, however pleasant it might be to think how easily and agreeably to himself he could have spent the whole of it in the course of a few days in London or Paris, it would be the height of folly so to do; such an act would indeed be killing the goose with the golden eggs. No: by judiciously investing his ten thousand pounds, he might secure for himself a comfortable little income of five hundred a year; which sum, when added to the income he could already call his own, would serve to make life tolerably pleasant in time to come. He would live in Paris, of course: somehow he always felt more at home in Paris than in

London. He would be able to dabble a little more than heretofore among his favourite bronzes, and coins, and old cups and saucers. He could afford a stall rather oftener at the Opera or the Français. He would drink a choicer wine to his dinner, and honour his wine with a better repast. A month or six weeks among the glaciers, or in the Black Forest, need no longer be a serious question with him on the score of expense. Altogether he felt very well satisfied with the pleasant future that seemed looming before him. That he was somewhat of an Epicurean, addicted to self-indulgence, and hardly knowing the meaning of self-sacrifice, cannot be denied; but it is to be hoped that we shall not altogether lose our interest in him on that account. He had many vague noble impulses, as most of us have at one time or another; but, as yet, no necessity had arisen in his life for testing whether those impulses were strong enough to bear chaining down to the hard rough usages of everyday life.

Often in his solitary musings he would ask himself of what possible use or service he was to the world in which he found himself; and now and then a dim idea would trouble him for awhile that there were many kinds of wheels turning in it, to one or other of which, if he were so minded, he might put his shoulder with some little profit both to himself and his fellows. But when next day came, it found him leading his old slipshod far-niente kind of life. Amid the glitter and bustle of the Boulevards, noble impulses and vague ideals seemed the stuff that poets rave about, and girls weave into the tissue of their dreams.

The more Miss Bellamy saw of Gerald, the better she liked him. The easy geniality of his disposition and the soft courtesy of his manner were alike pleasing to her. Gerald, on his side, conceived a very warm regard for the true-hearted lady who had been his dead mother's dearest friend. He soon got into the way of calling her "aunt"; the relationship seemed a natural one between them, and the assumption was satisfactory to both.

Miss Bellamy's sitting-room was a pleasant apartment, with three French windows that opened on a balcony and that looked out on the grass and trees of the square. It was pleasantly furnished, too; in a somewhat old-fashioned style it must be admitted; but then, Miss Bellamy herself was somewhat old-fashioned, so that there was nothing incongruous between the room and its mistress.

One of Miss Bellamy's most valued possessions was a portrait of her uncle, the late Dean of Winstead. It was a three-quarter-length in oils, with a very ornate frame, and it occupied a post of honour, being hung immediately over the chimney-piece, where it at once attracted the eyes of all who came into the room. The Dean, a very atrabilious-looking gentleman, with a bald head, was represented as seated at a table with one elbow resting on three thick volumes of his own

sermons, and with his thumb and forefinger pressed lightly against his cheek. Pens and ink were upon the table, and the Dean was presumably thinking out another of his discourses. Several copies of his sermons, together with an income of three hundred a year, had come to Miss Bellamy on the death of her reverend relative, so that she had ample reasons for cherishing his memory. You could not pay Miss Bellamy a higher compliment than to tell her that there was a strong family likeness between herself and her uncle, and her admiration for him rose almost to the height of hero-worship. She made a point of reading one of his sermons through every Sunday of her life. Her firm belief was that there were no such eloquent and soul-stirring appeals to an unawakened conscience to be met with in the lukewarm religious literature of to-day, and that you must go back to the days of Jeremy Taylor to find anything like their equal. From long habit, when sitting near a table, either thinking or working, she naturally fell into the same pose as that of the Dean in his picture—her elbow resting on the table, her thumb and forefinger pressed against her cheek—and those who knew her weakness—her friends, her toadies, and her pensioners—whenever they saw her sitting thus, would not fail to remark to her how like she was to her Very Reverend Uncle.

However deeply Gerald's curiosity might be excited to hear the sequel of the strange story which Miss Bellamy had promised to tell him, the subject was evidently so painful a one to her that he could not venture even to hint at his wishes in the matter. There was nothing for it but to wait patiently till she should feel in the humour to tell him what he wanted to know. He was in no particular hurry to take the journey to Pembridge, and a few days more or less in London were of no consequence to him. She had promised to tell him all about Eleanor, and he felt sure that she would not break her promise. In so thinking Gerald was quite right, but it was not until the evening of the fourth day after his arrival in London that Miss Bellamy recurred to the subject in any way.

"I will tell you to-morrow," she said to him that evening, as he shook hands with her at parting. "And then you must get down to Pembridge as quickly as you can. You have lingered in London quite long enough."

Miss Bellamy was a believer in suppers. In fact, she still stuck to the old-fashioned hours for meals, to which she had been accustomed when a girl at home: dinner at half-past one, tea at six, and supper at ten. In such a case supper is generally the pleasantest and most sociable meal of all; people then seem more inclined for talking than at any other time, and subjects that one hardly cares to mention during the day seem to assimilate themselves quite naturally to the time and place, and come to be discussed without much difficulty.

Supper was over, and the cloth removed. The night being cold,

Miss Bellamy had drawn her easy chair up close to the fire, and now sat resting her chin in the palm of one hand, and gazing silently into the glowing embers. Gerald, prepared to listen to a sad story, had thrown himself into an easy chair opposite Miss Bellamy on the other side the fire. At length Miss Bellamy roused herself with a sigh, and turned on Gerald a face that seemed suddenly to have grown five years older.

"Twenty years ago, this very month," she said, "a terrible murder was committed. All murders are terrible in a greater or a lesser degree, but this one was terrible, not merely from the crime itself, but from the after consequences that arose out of it. The name of the murdered man was Paul Stilling; the place where he was murdered was the Pelican Hotel, Tewkesbury; and the name of the man who was accused of the crime was Ambrose Murray."

Gerald started.

"Stilling was a young man, the junior partner in a firm of Birmingham jewellers. At the time he met with his death he had property on him of the value of four thousand pounds. It was for the sake of this property that he was murdered. He was found dead in his bed, stabbed to the heart. In the portmanteau of Ambrose Murray, who was stopping that night in the same hotel, was found a bracelet of the value of six hundred pounds, which had belonged to Stilling. No other portion of the property has, to my knowledge, ever been found from that day to this.

"Ambrose Murray was arrested, committed for wilful murder, subsequently tried, and condemned to death in due form," went on Miss Bellamy. "Before, however, the time had come for carrying out the last dread sentence of the law, symptoms of undoubted insanity manifested themselves in the condemned man, and his sentence had to be commuted into imprisonment for life."

Gerald sat lost in wonder.

"So far, I daresay, you see nothing uncommon in my story—nothing that has any particular interest for you. But when I tell you that Ambrose Murray's wife was my intimate friend, as well as being the intimate friend of your mother and your aunt—when I tell you that Ambrose Murray's wife died heartbroken within twelve months of the time her husband was taken from her; when I tell you that the child adopted by your uncle and aunt was none other than the child of a man condemned to death for murder, and that Eleanor Lloyd is in reality Eleanor Murray—when I tell you all this, you cannot say that my story has no interest for you, you cannot say that I have claimed your attention without sufficient warrant for so doing!"

"What a strange chapter of family history you have opened for me," exclaimed Gerald. "What you told me the other night seemed to me sufficiently wonderful, but this is stranger than all. Poor Eleanor

poor girl!" he added after a long while. "Although I have never seen her, I have always felt that when we did meet I should come to regard her as a sister; and now you tell me that I cannot even claim her as a cousin."

Miss Bellamy said nothing. She was gazing into the fire again, but with thoughts that were far away. She was roused at last by a direct question from Gerald.

"How much of the story you have just told me will be known to this Mr. Kelvin, when he comes to open the sealed packet which you sent him by my uncle's instructions?"

"He will know that Eleanor is no relation of your uncle, and that is the news which he will have to break to her. Inside his own packet is a second packet, sealed up and directed to Eleanor, and to be opened by her alone. This packet will tell her everything."

"What a shock for a girl like her!"

"You are right, Gerald; it will be a terrible shock. I cannot tell you how grateful I am that I have been spared the pain of enlightening her."

"About her father? Did you believe him to be guilty or innocent?"

"I would stake my life on Ambrose Murray's innocence. No one who ever knew him would for a single moment believe in his guilt. He was one of the gentlest-hearted men I ever met. There was something almost feminine about him. His was indeed a most lovable disposition."

"What was he by profession?"

"A doctor. He had been staying at Malvern for the benefit of his health—he was always delicate—and was walking home by easy stages. He had got as far as Tewkesbury, and happened to be stopping there on that one particular night when Paul Stilling was murdered."

"Is he still alive?"

"He is. I saw him only a few months ago. In fact, I have been in the habit of visiting him at intervals ever since his wife's death. For many years he did not know me. But gradually—imperceptibly almost—his reason has come back to him, and he is now, and has been for the last five years, as sane as either you or I."

"Is there no prospect of his ever being released?"

"None whatever, I'm afraid. You see, the crime—assuming him for the moment to have been guilty of it—was committed before his insanity declared itself. It is not as though he had been a lunatic at the time of the murder."

"What a terrible fate! Does he know that his daughter is alive?"

"He knows everything. It is at his own wish that Eleanor has been kept in ignorance of her real parentage for so long a time; and, had Jacob Lloyd lived, the secret would not have been told her even now."

"But how did it happen that none of the gossips of Pembridge found out that Eleanor was not my uncle's child?"

"It was not till about a year after their adoption of the child that your uncle, aunt, and Eleanor made their first appearance at Pembridge, your uncle having just bought Bridgeley, where he lived till he died. They had come from a town two hundred miles away, and did not know a soul in the place."

"Has no rumour of the truth ever crept out?"

"Never, I am certain."

"And Eleanor herself has never had any suspicion?"

"Not the slightest, so far as I know. How should she? She was but eleven months old when her mother died: far too young to have the faintest recollection of anything that happened."

At this moment, they both heard a knock at the front door, but without paying any heed to it. Miss Bellamy was never troubled with late visitors. There were other lodgers in the house, and the knock could come from no one in search of her.

But presently came the sound of footsteps on the stairs, followed by Eliza's timid tap at the room door. "Come in," said Miss Bellamy, a little more sharply than usual. She felt annoyed that her tête-à-tête with Gerald should be thus interrupted.

The door opened, and Eliza's head was intruded. "A gentleman to see you, ma'am. He won't give no name."

"A gentleman to see me!" said Miss Bellamy, as she started up in surprise. She felt slightly scandalised to think that any gentleman should be so indiscreet as to call upon her at such an hour as eleven o'clock p.m.

But by this time the gentleman, who followed the girl upstairs, had pushed himself into the room; and Eliza, a little frightened at his audacity, slunk timidly out and shut the door quickly behind her.

"May I ask, sir—" began Miss Bellamy frigidly, and then something in the stranger's face suddenly froze her into silence.

And yet not much of his face was to be seen, all the lower part of it being hidden in the folds of a large plaid, and the upper part shaded by the broad brim of a soft felt-hat, from under which looked forth two dark melancholy eyes of singular beauty. Miss Bellamy's hands began to tremble, and she leaned against the table for support.

The stranger did not speak; but, swiftly unrolling his plaid, let it half drop to the ground and took off his hat. Miss Bellamy's face grew as white as death. She started forward; and then she shrank back, all a-tremble. Gerald Warburton's eyes turned from the stranger to her and then went back to the man: a tall, thin, frail-looking figure, with a long white beard and white hair that fell over the collar of his coat.

"Sir—you—you—you are either Ambrose Murray, or his ghost!"

slowly gasped Miss Bellamy. "In Heaven's name, what has brought you here?"

"I have escaped!" exclaimed the man in a low, hoarse voice. "Escaped at last!"

He clasped his hands suddenly above his head, gave utterance to a short, sharp, hysterical laugh, staggered forward a few steps, and would have fallen to the ground had not Gerald Warburton caught him in his arms.

(To be continued)



A BRIDE SONG.

THRO' the vales to my love !

To the happy small nest of home,

Green from basement to roof,

Where the honey-bees come

To the window-sill flowers,

And dive from above,

Safe from the spider that weaves

Her warp and her woof

In some outermost leaves.

Thro' the vales to my love !

In sweet April hours

All rainbows and showers,

While dove answers dove, —

In beautiful May,

When the orchards are tender,

And frothing with flowers, —

In opulent June,

When the wheat stands up slender

By sweet-smelling hay,

And half the sun's splendour

Descends to the moon.

Thro' the vales to my love !

Where the turf is so soft to the feet,

And the thyme makes it sweet,

And the stately foxglove

Hangs silent its exquisite bells ;

And where water wells

The greenness grows greener,

And bulrushes stand

Round a lily to screen her.

Nevertheless, if this land,

Like a garden to smell and to sight,

Were turned to a desert of sand ;

Stripped bare of delight,

All its best gone to worst,

For my feet no repose,

No water to comfort my thirst,

And heaven like a furnace above, —

The desert would be

As gushing of waters to me,

The wilderness be as a rose,

If it led me to thee, O my love.

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI.

CHARLES VAN RHEYN.

I SHALL always say it was a singular thing that I should chance to go back to school that time the day before the quarter opened. Singular, because I heard and saw more of the boy I am going to tell of than I otherwise might have heard and seen. I was present at his arrival; and I was present at his—well, let us say, at his departure.

Dr. Frost was puzzling over a letter from France. Turning its pages over and back again, and staring at it through his spectacles, he at last brought it to me.

"You are a pretty good French scholar, Johnny; can you read this? I can't, I confess. But the paper's so thin, and the ink so pale, and the writing so small, I could scarcely see it if it were English."

As he said, the ink was pale, and it was a frightfully small and cramped handwriting. The letter was dated Rouen, and was signed curtly, "Van Rheyne," French fashion, without the writer's Christian name. Monsieur Van Rheyne wrote to say, that he was about to consign his son, Charles Aberleigh Van Rheyne, to Dr. Frost's care, and that he would arrive quickly after the letter, having already departed on his journey under the charge of a "gentilhomme Anglais." It added that the son would bring credentials with him; that he spoke some English, and was partly of English descent, through his mother the late Madame Van Rheyne, *née* Aberleigh.

"Rather a summary way of consigning a pupil to my charge," remarked Dr. Frost. "Aberleigh?—Aberleigh? She must have been one of the Aberleighs of Upton. Perhaps Hall knows?"

"There's none of the Aberleighs left now to know, sir," said Hall, when questioned. "There never was but two—after the old mother died: Miss Aberleigh and Miss Emma Aberleigh. Good fortunes the young ladies had, sir, and both of them, I remember, married on the same day. Miss Aberleigh to Captain Scott, and Miss Emma to a French gentleman, Mosseer Von Rheyne."

"I should think, by the name, he was Dutch—or Flemish; not French," remarked the Doctor.

"Anyway, sir, he was said to be French," remarked Hall. "A dark, sallow gentleman who wore a braided coat. The young ladies never came back to their home after the wedding day, and the place was sold. Captain Scott sailed with his wife for Injia, and Mosseer Von Rheyne took Miss Emma off to his house in France. Not long ago, I heard it said that poor Miss Emma was dead—Mrs. Von Rheyne, this is. A nice quiet girl, she was."

"Then I conclude the new pupil, advised to me, must be the son of Mr. Van Rheyn and Miss Emma Aberleigh," remarked the Doctor. "You must help to make things pleasant for him, Johnny: it will be a change at first from his own home and country. Do you remember that other French boy we had here?"

I did. And the remembrance made me laugh. He used to lament every day that he had not a plate of soup to dine off, and say the meat was tough.

Strolling out at the front gates in the course of the morning, I caught sight of the first boy. He was walking up from the Plough and Harrow Inn, with a large trunk behind him. And of all queer figures that boy looked the queerest. His trousers and vest were nankeen, his coat was a kind of open blouse, and flew out behind him like a big round tail; the hat he wore was a great big tall chimney-pot with a wide brim. Off went the hat, with a bow and a flourish of the arm, as he reached me and the gates.

"I ask your pardon, sir. This is, I believe, the pension of Mister the Doctor Frost?"

The French accent, the French manners, the French turn of the words told me who it was. For a minute or two I really could not answer for staring at him. He seemed to have arrived with a shaved head, as if just out of jail, or of brain fever. Really and truly it was the most remarkable figure ever seen out of a picture. I could not guess his age exactly: something perhaps between twelve and fourteen. He was slender and upright, and to all appearance strong.

"I think you must be Charles Van Rheyn," I said then, holding out my hand to welcome him. "Dr. Frost is expecting you."

As he put his hand into mine, such a glad brightness came into his rather large and honest grey eyes, that I liked him from that hour, in spite of the clothes and the freckled face and the shorn head. He had crossed from Folkestone by the night boat, and the gentleman, who was his escort to London, had there put him into the proper train to come on to his destination.

Dr. Frost was at the window, and came to the door. Van Rheyn stood still when within a yard of him, took his hat off with the most respectful air, and bowed his head down to the ground. He had evidently been brought up with a reverence for pastors and masters. The Doctor shook hands: and Van Rheyn gave him a large, square letter sealed with two flaming red seals and a coat of arms. It contained a draft for a good sum of money in advance of the first three months' payment, and some pages of closely-written matter in the crabbed hand of Monsieur Van Rheyn.

"Are you a Protestant or a Roman Catholic?" questioned Dr. Frost.

"I am Protestant, sir: the same that my mother was. We attended the Eglise of Monsieur le Pastor Mons, of the Culte Evangélique."

"This young gentleman is the son of the Miss Emma Aberleigh you once knew, Hall," spake the Doctor to her, with a view no doubt to put her on good terms with the new pupil.

"Yes, sir," she answered. "He favours his mamma about the eyes."

"She must have had very nice eyes," I put in.

"And so she had," said Van Rheyn, looking at me gratefully. "Thank you for saying it. I wish you could have known her!"

"And might I ask, sir, what has become of the other Miss Aberleigh?" asked Hall of Van Rheyn. "The young lady who went off to Injia with her husband on the wedding-day."

"You would say my Aunt Margaret? She is well. She and the Major and the children will make the voyage to Europe next year."

Van Rheyn said he should like to unpack his box, and we went upstairs together. Growing confidential over the unpacking, he gave me scraps of information touching his home and family, the mention of one item leading to another.

His baptismal name in full, he said, was Charles Jean Aberleigh; his father's was Jean Marie. Their home was a très joli château close to Rouen: in five minutes you could walk thither. It was all much changed since his mother died (he seemed to have loved her with a fervent love and to revere her memory); the last thing he did on coming away for England was to take some flowers to her grave. It was thought in Rouen that his father was going to make a second marriage with one of the Demoiselles de Tocqueville, whom his Aunt Claribelle did not like. His Aunt Claribelle, his father's sister, had come to live at the château when his mother died; but if that Thérèsine de Tocqueville came into the house she would quit it. The Demoiselles de Tocqueville had hardly any *dot*,—which would be much against the marriage, Aunt Claribelle thought, and bad for his father; because when he (Charles) should be the age of twenty-one, all the money came to him; it had been his mother's and was so settled; and his father's property was but very small. Of course he should wish his father to keep always as much as he pleased, but Aunt Claribelle said the English trustees would be sure not to allow that. His mother had wished him to finish his education in England and to go to one of the two colleges to which English gentlemen went.

"Halloa, here comes old Fontaine!" I interrupted at this juncture, happening to see him from the window. Van Rheyn looked up from his shirts, which he was counting. He seemed to have the tidiest ways in the world. "You can talk away with him in your native tongue as much as you will, Van Rheyn."

"But I have come here to speak the English tongue, not the French," debated he, looking at me seriously. "My father wishes me to speak and read it without any strange accent; and I wish it also."

"You speak it very well already."

"But you can tell that it is not my native tongue—that I am a foreigner."

"Of course. What are you to be, Van Rheyn?"

"I need not be any thing: I have enough fortune to be a rentier—I don't know what you call that in English; it means a gentleman who lives on his money. But I wish, myself, to be an English priest."

"An English priest! Do you mean a parson?"

"Yes, I mean that. So you see I must learn the English tongue perfectly. My mother used to talk to me about the priests in her own land ——"

"Parsons, Van Rheyn."

"I beg your pardon: I forget. And I fear I have much caught up the French names for things since my mother died. It was neither priest nor parson she used to call the English ministers."

"Clergymen, perhaps?"

"That was it. She said the clergymen were all good men, and she should like me to be one clergyman. In winter, when it was cold and she had some fire in her chamber, I used to sit up there with her, after coming home from classe, and we talked together, our two selves. I should have much money, she said, when I grew to be a man, and could lead an idle life. But she would not like that: she wanted me to be a good man, and to go to Heaven when I died, where she would be; and she thought if I were a clergyman I should have serious thoughts always. So I wish to be one clergyman."

He said all this with the greatest simplicity and composure, just as he might have spoken of going for a ride. Indeed, he seemed to be of a thoroughly simple, straightforward nature.

"It might involve your living over here, Van Rheyn: once you were in Orders."

"Yes, I know. Papa would not mind. England was mamma's country, and she loved it. There was more peace in England than in France, she thought."

"I say, she must have been a good mother, Van Rheyn."

In a moment his grey eyes were shining at me through a mist of tears. "Oh, she was so good, so good! You can never know. If she had lived I should never have had sorrow."

"What did she die of?"

"Ah, I cannot tell. She was well in the morning, and she was dead at night. Not that she was strong ever. It was one *Dimanche*. We had been to the Office, she and I——"

"What office?"

"Oh pardon—I forget I am speaking English. I mean to church. Monsieur Mons had preached; and we were walking along the street towards home afterwards, mamma talking to me about the sermon, which had been a very holy one, when we met the Aunt Claribelle

who had come into the town for high mass at St. Ouen. Mamma asked her to come home and dine with us; and she said yes, but she must first go to say bon-jour to old Madame Soubitez. As she parted with us, there was suddenly a great outcry. It was fête at Rouen that Sunday. Some bands of music were to play on the estrade in the public garden, competing for a prize, consequently the streets were crowded. We looked back at the noise, and saw many horses, without riders, galloping along towards us; men, running after them, shouting and calling; and the people, mad with fright, tumbling over one another in effort to get away. Later we heard that these horses, frightened by something, had broken out of an hotel post-yard. Well, mamma gave just a cry of fear and held my hand tighter as we set off to run with the rest, the horses stamping wildly after us. But the people pushed between us, and I lost her. She was at home before me, and was sitting on the side of the fountain, inside the château entrance-gate, her face all white and blue, as she clung to the nearest lion with both hands. I had never seen her look so. Come in, mamma, I said, and take a little glass of cordial: but she could not answer me, and did not stir. I called one of the servants, and by-and-by she got a little breath again, and went into the house leaning upon both of us, and so up to her chamber. Quite immediately papa came home: he always went in town to his club on the Sunday mornings, and he ran for Monsieur Petit, the médecin—the doctor. By seven o'clock in the evening, mamma was dead."

"Oh dear! What was the cause?"

"Papa did not tell me. He and Monsieur Petit talked about the heart. They said it was feeble. Oh, how we cried, papa and I! He cried for many days. I hope he will not bring home Thérèsine de Tocqueville!"

The dinner-bell rang out, and we went down. Dr. Frost was putting up the letter, which old Fontaine had been translating to him. It was full of directions about Van Rheyn's health. What he was to do, and what not to do. Monsieur Van Rheyn said his son was not strong: he was not to be allowed to do the gymnastics, or the "boxing," or to play at rough games, or take violent exercise of any kind; and a small glass of milk was to be given him at night when he went to bed. If the clothes sent over with him were not suitable to the school, or in accordance with the English mode, Dr. Frost was prayed to be at the trouble of procuring him new ones. He was to be brought well on in all the studies necessary to constitute the "gentilhomme," and especially in the speaking and reading of English.

Dr. Frost directed his spectacles to Charles Van Rheyn, examining him from top to toe. The round, red, freckled face, and the strongly-built frame appeared to give nothing but indications of robust health. The Doctor questioned him in what way he was not strong—whether he

was subject to a cough, or to want of appetite, and other such items. But Van Rheyn seemed to know nothing about it, and said he had always been quite well.

"The father fears we should make him into a muscular Englishman, hence these restrictions," thought Dr. Frost.

In the afternoon, the fellows began to come in thick and threefold. To describe their amazement when they saw Van Rheyn is quite beyond me. It seemed that they never meant to leave off staring. Some of them gave him a little chaff, even that first night. Van Rheyn was very shy and silent. Though entirely at his ease with me alone, the numbers seemed to daunt him; to strike him and his courage into himself.

On the whole, Van Rheyn was not liked. Once let a school set itself against a new fellow at first—and Van Rheyn's queer appearance had done that much for him—it takes a long while to bring matters round—if they ever are brought round. When his hair began to sprout, it looked exactly like pig's bristles. And that was the first nickname he got: Bristles. The Doctor had soon changed his style of coat, and he wore jackets, as we did.

Charles Van Rheyn did not seem inclined to grow sociable. Shy and silent as he had shown himself to them that first evening, so he remained. True, he got no encouragement to be otherwise. The boys threw ridicule on him continually, making him into an almost perpetual butt. Any mistake in the pronunciation of an English word—Van Rheyn never made a mistake as to its *meaning*—they hissed and groaned and shouted at. I shall never forget one. Being asked when that Indian lot intended to arrive (meaning the Scotts), and whether they would make the voyage in a palanquin (for the boys plied him with ridiculous questions purposely), he answered Not in a palanquin, but in a sheep—meaning ship. The uproar at that was so vast, that some of the masters looked in to know what was up.

Van Rheyn, too, was next door to helpless. He did not climb, or kick, or even run. Had never been used to do it, he said. What *had* he been used to do then, he was asked, one day. Oh, he had sat out in the garden with his mother; and since her death, with Aunt Claribelle; and gone for an airing in the carriage three times a week. Was he a girl? roared the boys. Did he sew patchwork? Not now; he had left off sewing when he was nine, answered Van Rheyn innocently, unconscious of the storm of mockery the avowal would invoke. "Pray, were you born a young lady?—or did they change you at nurse?" shouted Jessup, who would have kept the ball rolling till midnight. "I say, you fellows, he has come to the wrong school: we don't take in girls, we don't. Let me introduce one to you—Miss Charlotte."

And, so poor Charley Van Rheyn got that nickname as well as the other : Miss Charlotte.

Latin was a stumbling-block. Van Rheyn had learnt it according to French rules and French pronunciation, and he could not readily get into our English mode. "It was bad enough to have to teach a stupid boy Latin," grumbled the under Latin master (under Dr. Frost), "but worse to have to un-teach him." Van Rheyn was not stupid, however ; if he seemed so, it was because his new life was so strange to him.

One day the boys dared him to a game at leap-frog. Some of them were at it in the yard, and Van Rheyn stood by, looking on. "Why don't you go in for it?" suddenly asked Parker, giving him a push. "There is to be a round or two at boxing this evening, why don't you go in for *that*?" "They never would let me do these rough things," replied Van Rheyn, who invariably answered all the chaffing civilly and patiently. "Who wouldn't? Who's they?" "My mother and my Aunt Claribelle. Also, when I was starting to come here, my father said to me I was not to exert myself." "All right, Miss Charlotte ; but why on earth did not the respectable old gentleman send you over in petticoats? Never was such a thing heard of, you know, as for a girl to wear a coat and pantaloons. It's not decent, Miss Charlotte ; it's not modest." "Why you say all this to me for ever? I am not a girl," said poor Van Rheyn. "No? don't tell fibs. If you were not a girl you'd go in for our games. Come! Leap-frog's especially edifying, I assure you: expands the mind. Won't you try it?"

Well, the upshot was, that they dared him to try it. A dozen, or so, set on at him like so many wolves. What with that, and what with their stinging ridicule, poor Van Rheyn was goaded out of his obedience to home orders, and did try it. After a few tumbles, he went over very tolerably, and did not dislike it at all.

"If I can only learn to do as the rest of you do, perhaps they will let me alone," he said to me that same night, a kind of hopeful eagerness in his bright grey eyes.

And gradually he did learn to go in for most of the games: running, leaping, and climbing. One thing he absolutely refused—wrestling. "Why should gentlemen, who were to be gentlemen all their lives, fight each other?" he asked; "they would not have to fight as men; it was not kind; it was unpleasant; it was hard." The boys were hard on him for saying it, mocking him frightfully: but they could not shake him there. He was of right blue blood; never caving-in before them, as Bill Whitney expressed it one day; he only was quiet, and endured.

Whether the native Rouen air is favourable to freckles, I don't know; but those on Van Rheyn's face gradually disappeared over here. The complexion lost its redness also, becoming fresh and fair, with a brightish colour on the cheeks. The hair, getting longer, turned out to be of a smooth brown: altogether he was good-looking.

"I say, Johnny, do you know Van Rheyn's ill?"

The words came from William Whitney. He whispered them in my ear as we stood up for prayers before breakfast. The school had opened about a month then.

"What's the matter with him?"

"Don't know," answered Bill. "He is staying in bed."

Cribbing some minutes from breakfast, I went up to his room. Van Rheyn looked pale as he lay, and said he had been sick. Hall declared it was nothing but a sick headache, and Van Rheyn thought she might be right.

"Yes, the migraine," he assented. "I have had it before."

"Well, look here, Charley," I said, after thinking a minute; "if I were you I'd not say as much to any of them. Let them suppose you are regularly ill. You'll never hear the last of it if they know you lie in bed for only a headache."

"But I cannot get up," he answered: "my head is in much pain. And I have the fever. Feel my hand."

The hand he put out was burning hot. But that went with sick headaches sometimes.

It turned out to be nothing worse, for he was well on the morrow; and I need not have mentioned it at all, but for a little matter that arose out of the day's illness. Going up again to see him after school in the afternoon, I found Hall standing over the bed with a cup of tea, and a most severe, not to say horror-struck, expression of countenance, as she gazed down on him, staring at something with all her eyes. Van Rheyn was asleep, and looked better; his face flushed and moist, his brown hair, still uncommonly short, compared with ours, pushed back. He lay with his hands outside the bed, as if the clothes were heavy—the weather was fiery hot—and one of them was clasping something that hung round his neck by a narrow blue ribbon, and seemed to have been pulled by him out of the opening in his night-shirt. Hall's quick eyes had detected what it was—a very small cross (hardly two inches long), on which was carved a figure of the Saviour, all in gold.

Now Hall had doubtless many virtues.—One of them was docking us boys of our due allowance of sugar.—But she had also many prejudices. And of all her prejudices none was stronger than her abhorrence of idols, as exemplified in carved images and Chinese gods.

"Do you see that, Master Ludlow?" she whispered to me, pointing her finger straight at the little cross of gold. "It's no better than a relict of paganism."

Stooping down, she gently drew the cross out of Van Rheyn's hot, clasped hand, and let it lie on the sheet. A beautiful little cross it was; the face of the Saviour; an exquisite face in its expression of suffering and patient humility; one that you might have gazed upon and

been the better for. How they could have so perfectly carved a thing so small, I did not know.

"He must be one of them worshipping Romanics," said Hall, snatching her fingers from the cross as if she thought it would give her the ague. "Or else a pagan! And he goes every week and says his commandments in class, a-standing up afore all the school! I wonder what the Doctor——"

Hall cut short her complaints. Van Rheyn had suddenly opened his eyes and was looking up at us.

"I find myself better," he said with a smile. "The pain has mostly departed."

"We wasn't thinking of pain and headaches, Master Van Rheyn, but of *this*," said Hall resentfully, taking the spoon out of the saucer and pointing it to the gold cross. Van Rheyn raised his head from the pillow to look.

"Oh, it is my little cross," he said, holding it out to our view as far as the ribbon allowed, and speaking with perfect ease and unconcern. "Is it not beautiful?"

"Very," I said, stooping over it.

"Be you of the Romanic sex?" demanded Hall of Van Rheyn.

"Am I—— What is it Mistress Hall would ask?" he broke off to question me, in the midst of my burst of laughter.

"She asks if you are a Roman Catholic, Van Rheyn."

"But no. Why you think that?" he added to her. "My father is Roman Catholic: I am Protestant, like my mother."

"Then why on earth, sir, do you wear such a idol as that?" returned Hall.

"This? Oh, it is nothing: it is not an idol. It does me good."

"Good!" fiercely repeated Hall. "Does you good to wear a brazen image next the skin!——right under the flannel waistcoat. I wonder what the school will come to next!"

"Why should I not wear it?" said Van Rheyn "What harm does it do me, this? It was my poor Aunt Annette's. The last time we went to the Aunt Claribelle's to see her, when the hope of her was gone, she put the cross into my hand, and bade me keep it for her sake."

"I tell you, Master Van Rheyn, it's just a brazen image," persisted Hall.

"It is a keepsake," dissented Van Rheyn. "I showed it to Monsieur Mons one day when he was calling on mamma, and told him it was the gift to me of the poor Tante Annette. M. Mons thought it very pretty, and said it would remind me of the great Sacrifice."

"But to wear it again' your skin!" went on Hall, not giving in. Giving in on the matter of graven images was not in her nature. Or on any matter, as far as that went, that concerned us boys. "I've heard of poor misledeluded people putting horse-hair next 'em. And fine torment it must be!"

"I have worn it since mamma died," quietly answered Van Rheyn who seemed not to understand Hall's zeal. "She kept it for me always in her little shell-box that had the silver crest on it; but when she died, I said I would put the cross round my neck, for fear of losing it: and Aunt Claribelle, who took the shell-box then, bought me the blue ribbon."

"Well, it's a horrid heathenish thing to do, Master Van Rheyn, and I don't believe Miss Emma Aberleigh would ever have give countenance to it. Leastways afore she lived amid them foreign Frenchfolks," added Hall, virtually dropping the contest, as Van Rheyn slipped the cross out of view within his night-shirt. "What she might have come to, after she went off there, Heaven alone knows. Be you a-going to drink this tea, sir, or be you not?"

Van Rheyn drank the tea and thanked her gratefully for bringing it, the gratitude shining as well out of his nice grey eyes. Hall took back the cup and tucked him up again, telling him to get a bit more sleep and he would be all right in the morning. With all her prejudices and sourness, she was as good as gold when any of us were ill.

"Not bathe! Not bathe! I say, you fellows, here's a lark! Bristles thinks he'd better not try the water!"

It was a terribly hot evening, close upon sunset. Finding ourselves, some half-dozen of us, near the river, Van Rheyn being one, the water looked too pleasant not to be plunged into. The rule at Dr. Frost's was that no boy should be compelled to bathe against his inclination. Van Rheyn was the only one who had availed himself of the exception. It was Parker who spoke: we were all undressing quickly.

"What's your objection, Miss Charlotte? Girls bathe."

"They never let me go into cold water at home," was the patient answer. "We take warm baths there."

"Afraid of cold water! well, I never! What an everlasting big pussy-cat you are, Miss Charlotte! I've heard before that pussies don't like to wet their feet."

"Our doctor at Rouen used to say I must not plunge into cold water," said poor Van Rheyn, nearly driven wild. "The shock would not be good for me."

"I say, who'll write off to Evesham for a pair of water-proofs to put over his shoes? Just give us the measure of your foot, Miss Charlotte."

"Oh bother! Shut him up in a feather bed!"

"Why, the water's not cold, you donkey!" cried out Bill Whitney, who had just leaped in. "It's as warm as new milk. What on earth will you be fit for, Bristles? You'll never make a man."

"Make a man! What are you thinking of, Whitney? Miss Charlotte has no ambition that way. Girls prefer to grow up into young ladies, not into men."

"Is it truly warm?" asked Van Rheyn, looking at the river irresolutely, and thinking that if he went in the mockery might cease.

I looked up at him from the water. "It is indeed, Van Rheyn, Quite warm."

He knew he might trust me, and began slowly to undress. We had continued to be the best of comrades, and I never went in for teasing him as the rest did; rather shielded him when I could, and took his part.

By the time he was ready to go in—for he did nothing nimbly, and the undressing made no exception—some of us were ready to come out. One of Dr. Frost's rules in regard to bathing was stringent—that no boy should remain in the water more than three minutes at the very extent. He held that a great deal of harm was done by prolonged bathing. Van Rheyn plunged in—and liked it.

"It is warm and pleasant," he exclaimed. "This cannot hurt me."

"Hurt you, you great baby!" shouted Parker.

Van Rheyn had put his clothes in the tidiest manner upon the grass—not like ours, which were flung down any way; waistcoats here, stockings yonder. His things were laid smoothly one upon another, in the order he took them off—the jacket first, the flannel waistcoat uppermost. Though I daresay I should not have noticed this but for a shout from Jessup.

"Halloa! What's that?"

Those of us who were out, and in the several stages of drying or dressing, turned round at the words. Jessup, buttoning his braces, was standing by Van Rheyn's heap, looking down at it. On the top of the flannel singlet, lay the gold cross with the blue ribbon.

"What on earth is it?" cried Jessup, picking it up; and at the moment Van Rheyn, finding all the rest out of the water, came out himself. "Is it a charm?"

"It is mine—it is my gold cross," spoke Van Rheyn, catching up one of the wet towels to rub himself with. The bath this evening had been impromptu, and we had but two towels between us, that Parker and Whitney had brought. In point of fact, it had been against rules also, for we were not expected to go into the river without the presence of a master. But just at this bend it was perfectly safe. Jessup passed the blue ribbon round his neck, letting the cross hang behind. This done, he turned himself about for general inspection, and the boys crowded round to look.

"What do you say it is, Bristles?"

"My gold cross."

"You don't mean to tell us to our faces that you wear it?"

"I wear it always," freely answered Van Rheyn.

Jessup took it off his neck, and the boys passed it about from one to another. They did not ridicule the cross—I think the emblem on it prevented that—but they ridiculed Van Rheyn.

"A friend of mine went over to the tar-and-feather islands," said Millichip, executing an aggravating war dance round and about Charley. "He found the natives sporting no end of charms and amulets—nearly all the attire they did sport—rings in the nose and chains in the ears. What relation are those natives to you, Miss Charlotte?"

"Don't injure it, please," pleaded Van Rheyn.

"We've got an ancient nurse at home that carries the tip of a calf's tongue in her pocket for luck," shrieked out Thorne. "And I've heard—I *have* heard, Bristles—that any fellow who arms himself with a pen'orth of blue-stone from the druggist's, couldn't have the yellow jaundice if he tried. What might you wear this for, pray?"

"My Aunt Annette gave it me as a present when she was dying," answered poor helpless Charley; who had never the smallest notion of taking the chaff otherwise than seriously, or of giving chaff back again. He had dressed himself to his trousers and shirt, and stood with his hand stretched out, waiting for his cross.

"In the Worcester Journal, one day last June, I read an advertisement as big as a house, offering a child's caul for sale," cried Snapp. "Any gentleman or lady buying that caul and taking it to sea, could never be drowned. Bristles thinks as long as he wears this, he'll not come to be hanged."

"How's your grandmother, Miss Charlotte?"

"I wish you would please to let me alone," said he patiently. "My father would not have placed me here had he known."

"Why don't you write and tell him, Bristles?"

"I would not like to grieve him," simply answered Charley. "I can bear. And he does so much want me to learn the good English."

"This cross is gold," said Bill Whitney, who now had it. "I'd not advise you to fall amid thieves, Van Rheyn. They might ease you of it. The carving must be worth something."

"It cost a great deal to buy, I have heard my aunt say. Will you be so good as to give it me, that I may finish to dress myself?"

Whitney handed him the cross. Time was up, in fact; and we had to make a race for the house. Van Rheyn was catching it hot and sharp, all the way.

One might have thought that his very meekness, the non-resisting spirit in which he took things, would have disarmed the mockery. But it did not. Once go in wholesale for putting upon some particular fellow in a school, and the fun gains with use. I don't think any of them meant to be really unkind to Van Rheyn; but the play had begun, and they enjoyed it.

I once saw him in tears. It was at the dusk of evening. Charley had come in for it awfully at tea-time, I forget what about, and afterwards disappeared. An hour later, going into Whitney's room for me thing Bill asked me to fetch, I came upon Van Rheyn—who also

slept there. He was sitting at the foot of his low bed, his cheek leaning on one of his hands, and the tears running down swiftly. One might have thought his heart was broken.

"What is the grievance, Charley?"

"Do not say to them that you saw me," returned he, dashing away his tears. "I did not expect any of you would come up."

"Look here, old fellow. I know it's rather hard lines for you just now. But they don't mean anything: it is done in sport, not malice. They don't *think*, you see. You will be sure to live it down."

"Yes," he sighed, "I hope I shall. But it is so different here from what it used to be. I had the happiest home; I never had one sorrow when my mother was alive. Nobody cares for me now; nobody is kind to me: it is a great change."

"Take heart, Charley," I said, holding out my hand. "I know you will live it down in time."

Of all the fellows I ever met, I think he was the most grateful for a word of kindness. As he thanked me with a look of hope in his eyes, I saw that he had been holding the cross clasped in his palm; for it dropped as he put his hand into mine.

"It helps me to bear," he said, in a whisper. "My mother, who loved me so, is in Heaven; my father has married Mademoiselle Thérèsine de Tocqueville. I have no one now."

"Your father has not married that Thérèsine de Tocqueville!"

"But, yes. I had the letter just after dinner."

So perhaps he was crying for the home unhappiness as much as for his school grievances. It all reads strange, no doubt, and just the opposite of what might be expected of one of us English boys. The French bringing-up is different from ours: perhaps it lay in that. On the other hand, a French boy, generally speaking, possesses a very shallow sense of religion. But Van Rheyn had been reared by his English mother; and his disposition seemed to be naturally serious and uncommonly pliable and gentle. At any rate, whether it reads improbable or probable, it is the truth.

I got what I wanted for Bill Whitney, and went down, thinking what a hard life it was for him—what a shame that we made it so. Indulged, as Van Rheyn must have always been, as tenderly treated as a girl, sheltered from the world's roughness, all that coddling must have become to him as second nature; and the remembrance lay with him still. Over here, he was suddenly cut off from it, thrown into another atmosphere, isolated from country, home, home-ties, and associations; and compelled to stand the daily brunt of this petty tyranny.

Getting Tod apart that night, I put the matter to him: what a shame it was, and how sorry I felt for Charley Van Rheyn; and I asked him whether he thought he could not (he having a great deal of weight in the school) make things pleasanter for him. Tod responded that I

should never be anything but a muff, and that the roasting Van Rheyn got treated to was superlatively good for him, if ever he was to be made into a man.

However, before another week ran out, Dr. Frost interfered. How he got at the reigning politics we never knew. One Saturday afternoon, when old Fontaine had taken Van Rheyn out with him, the Doctor walked into the midst of us, to the general consternation.

Standing in the centre of the schoolroom, with a solemn face, all of us backing as much as possible, and those of the under-masters who chanced to be present rising also, the Doctor spoke of Van Rheyn. He had reason to suspect, he said, that we were doing our best to worry Van Rheyn's life out of him: and he put the question deliberately to us (and made us answer it), how we, if consigned alone to a foreign home, all its inmates strangers, would like to be served so. He did not wish, he went on, to think he had pitiful, ill-disposed boys, lacking hearts and common kindness, in his house: he felt sure that what had passed arose from a heedless love of mischief; and it would greatly oblige him to find from henceforth that our conduct to Van Rheyn changed: he thought and hoped that he had only to express a wish upon the point to insure obedience.

With that—and a hearty nod and smile around, as if he put it as a personal favour to himself, and wanted us to see that he did, and was not angry, he went out again. A counsel was held to determine whether we had a sneak among us—else how could Frost have known? But none could be pitched upon: every individual fellow, senior and junior, protested earnestly that he had not let out a syllable. And, to tell the truth, I don't think we had.

However, the Doctor was obeyed. From that day, all real annoyance to Charles Van Rheyn ceased. I don't say but what there would be a laugh at him now and then, or that he lost his names of Bristles and Miss Charlotte; but virtually the sting was gone. Charley was as grateful as could be, and seemed quite happy; and upon the arrival of a hamper by *grande vitesse* from Rouen, containing a huge rich wedding-cake and some packets of costly sweetmeats, he divided the whole amid us, keeping the merest taste for himself. The school made its comments in return.

"He's not a bad lot, after all, that Van Rheyn. He will make a man yet."

"It isn't a bit of use your going in for this, Van Rheyn, unless you can run like a lamplighter."

"But I can run, you know," responded Van Rheyn.

"Yes. But can you keep the pace up?"

"Why not?"

"We may be out for three or four hours, pelting like mad all the time."

"I feel no fear of keeping up," said Van Rheyn. "I will go."

"All right."

It was on a Saturday afternoon; and we were turning out for Hare and Hounds. The quarter was hard upon its close, for September was passing. Van Rheyn had never seen Hare and Hounds: it had been let alone during the hotter weather: and it was Tod who now warned him that he might not be able to keep up the running. It requires fleet legs and easy breath, as everybody knows; and Van Rheyn had never much exercised either.

"What is just the game?" he asked in his quaintly-turned phrase. And I answered him—for Tod had gone away.

"You see those torn strips of old copy-books that they are twisting? That is for the scent. The hare fills his pockets with it, and drops a piece of it every now and then as he runs. We, the hounds, follow his course by means of the scent, and catch him if we can."

"And then?" questioned Van Rheyn.

"Then the game is over."

"And what if you not catch him?"

"The hare wins; that's all. What he likes to do is to double upon us cunningly and lead us home again after him. We vault over the obstructions—gates, and stiles, and hedges, and that. Or, if the hedges are too high, scramble through them."

"But some hedges are very thick and close: nobody could get through them," debated Van Rheyn, taking the words, as usual, too literally.

"Then we are dished. And have to find some other way onwards."

"I can do what you say quite easily."

"All right, Charley," I repeated, as Tod had done. And neither of us had the smallest thought that it was not all right.

Millichip was chosen hare. Snapp turned cranky over something or other at the last moment, and backed out of it. He made the best hare in the school: but Millichip was nearly as fleet a runner.

What with making the scent, and having it out with Snapp, time was hindered; and it must have been getting on for four o'clock when we started. Which docked the run considerably, for we had to be in at six to tea. Letting the hare get on well ahead, the signal was given, and we started after him in full cry, rending the air with shouts and rushing along like the wind.

A right-down good hare, Millichips turned out to be; doubling and twisting and finessing, and exasperating the hounds considerably. About five o'clock he had made tracks for home, as we found by the scent; but we could neither see him nor catch him. Later, I chanced to come to grief in a treacherous ditch, lost my straw hat, and tore the sleeve of my jacket. This threw me behind the rest; and when I pelted up to the next stile, there stood Van Rheyn. He had halted to rest his

arms on it ; his breath was coming in alarming gasps, his face whiter than any sheet.

"Halloa, Van Rheyn ! What's up ! The pace is too much for you."

"It was my breath," said he, when the gasps allowed him to answer. "I go on now."

I put my arm on him. "Look here : the run's nearly over ; we shall soon be at home. Don't go on so fast."

"But I want to be in at what they call the death."

"There'll be no death to-day : the hare's safe to win."

"I want to keep up," he answered, getting over the stile. "I said I could keep up, and do what the rest did." And off he was again, full rush.

Before us, on that side of the stile, was a tolerably wide field. The pack had wound half over it during this short halt, making straight for the entrance to the coppice at the other end. We were doing our best to catch them up, when I distinctly saw a heavy stone flung into their midst. Looking at the direction it came from, there crept a dirty ragamuffin over the ground on his hands and knees. He did not see us two behind ; and he flung another heavy stone. Had it struck anyone's head it would have done damage.

Letting the chase go, I stole across and pounced upon him before he could get away. He twisted himself out of my hands like an eel, and stood grinning defiance and whistling to his dog. We knew the young scamp well : but could never decide whether he was a whole scamp, or a half natural. At any rate, he was vilely bad, was the pest of the neighbourhood, and had enjoyed some short sojourns in prison for trespass. Raddy was the name he went by ; we knew him by no other ; and how he got a living nobody could tell.

"What did you throw those stones for ?"

"Shan't tell ye. Didn't throw 'em at you."

"You had better mind what you are about, Mr. Raddy, unless you want to get into trouble."

"Yah—you !" grinned Raddy.

There was nothing to be made of him ; there never was anything. I should have been no match for Raddy in an encounter ; and he would have killed me without the slightest compunction. Turning to go on my way, I was in time to see Van Rheyn tumble over the stile and disappear within the coppice. The rest must have nearly shot out of its other end by that time. It was a coppice that belonged to Sir John Whitney. Once through it, we were on our own grounds, and within a field of home.

I went on leisurely enough : no good to try to catch them up now. Van Rheyn would not do it, and he had more than half a field's start of me. It must have been close upon six, for the sun was setting in a

ball of fire ; the amber sky around it was nearly as dazzling as the sun, and lighted up the field.

So that, plunging into the coppice, it was like going into a dungeon. For a minute or two, with the reflection of that red light lingering in my eyes, I could hardly see the narrow path. The trees were dark, thick, and met overhead. I ran along whistling : wondering whether that young Raddy was after me with his ugly dog ; wondering why Sir John did not —

The whistling and the thoughts came to a summary close together. At the other end of the coppice, but a yard or two on this side the stile that divided it from the open field, there was Charles Van Rheyne on the ground, his back against the trunk of a tree, his arms stretched up clasping hold of it. But for that clasp, and the laboured breath, I might have thought he was dying. For his face was ghastly to look upon, blue all round the mouth, and had the strangest expression I ever saw.

"Charley, what's the matter?"

But he could not answer. He was panting frightfully, as though every gasp would be his last. What on earth was I to do? Down I knelt, saying never another word.

"It—gives—me—much—hurt," said he at length, with a long pause between every word.

"What does?"

"Here,"—pointing to his chest—towards the left side.

"Did you hurt yourself?—Did you fall?"

"No, I not hurt myself. I fall because not able to run more. It is the breath. I wish papa was near me!"

Instinct told me that he must have assistance—and yet I did not like to leave him. But what if delay in getting it should be dangerous? I rose up to go.

"You—you not going to quit me!" he cried out, putting his feeble grasp on my arm.

"But, Charley, I want to get somebody to you," I said in an agony. "I can't do anything for you myself: anything in the world."

"No, you stay. I should not like to be alone if I die."

The shock the word gave me I can recal yet. Die! If there was any fear of *that*, it was all the more necessary I should make a rush for Dr. Frost and Mr. Featherstone. Never had I been so near my wit's end before, from uncertainty as to what course I ought to take.

All in a moment, there arose a shrill whistle on the other side the stile. It was like a godsend. I knew it quite well for that vicious young reptile's, but it was welcome to me as sunshine in harvest.

"There's Raddy, Van Rheyne. I will send him."

Vaulting over the stile, I saw the young man standing with his back to me near the hedge, his wretched outer garment—sack without shape

—hitched up, his hands in the pockets of his dilapidated trousers, that hung in fringes below the knee. He was whistling to his dog in the coppice. They must have struck through the tangles and briars higher up, which was a feat of difficulty and strictly forbidden by law. It was well Sir John's agent did not see Mr. Raddy—whose legs, scratched and bleeding, gave ample proof of the trespass.

"Yah!—yah!" he shrieked out, turning at the sound of me, and grinning fresh defiance.

"Raddy," I said, speaking in a persuasive tone to propitiate him in my great need, "I want you to do something for me. Go to Dr. Frost as quickly as you are able, and say——"

Of all the derisive, horrible laughs, his interruption was the worst and loudest. It drowned the words.

"One of the school has fallen and hurt himself," I said, putting it that way. "He's lying here, and I cannot leave him. Hush, Raddy! I want to tell you,"—advancing a step or two nearer to him and lowering my voice to a whisper,—"*I think he is dying.*"

"None o' yer gammon here; none o' yer lies"—and in proportion as I advanced, he retreated. "You've got a ambush in that there cobby—all the spicey lot on ye a-waiting to be down on me to serve me out! Just you try it on!"

"I am telling you the truth, Raddy. There's not a soul in there but the one boy I speak of. I say I fear he is dying. He is lying down helpless.—I will pay you to go:" feeling in my pockets to see how much I had there.

Raddy displayed his teeth: it was a trick of his when feeling particularly defiant. "What'll yer pay me?"

"Sixpence"—showing it to him. "I will give it you when you have taken the message."

"Give it first."

Just for a moment I hesitated in my extremity of need, but I knew it would be only the sixpence thrown away. Paid beforehand, Raddy would no more do the errand than he'd fly. I told him as much.

"Then, be dashed if I go!" And he passed off into a round of swearing.

Good heavens! if I should not be able to persuade him! If Charles Van Rheyn should die for lack of help!

"Did you ever have anybody to care for, Raddy? Did you ever have a mother?"

"Her's sent over the seas, her is; and I be glad on't. Her beated of me, her did: I warn't a-going to stand that."

"If you ever had anybody you cared for the least bit in the world, Raddy; if you ever did anybody a good turn in all your life, you will help this poor fellow now. Come and look at him. See whether I dare leave him."

"None o' yer swindles! Ye wants to get me in there, ye does. Yah! I warn't borned yesterday."

Well, it seemed hopeless. "Will you go for the sixpence if I give it you beforehand, Raddy?"

"Give it over, and see.—Where the thunder have ye been?" dealing his dog a savage kick, as it came up, barking. "Be I to whistle ye all day, d'ye think?" Another kick.

I had found two sixpences in my pocket; all its store. Bringing forth one, I held it out to him.

"Now listen, Raddy. I give you this sixpence now. You are to run with all your might to the house—and you can run, you know, like the wind. Say that I sent you—you know my name, Johnny Ludlow—sent you to tell them that the French boy is in the coppice dying:—for I thought it best to put it strong. "Dr. Frost, or some of them, must come to him at once, and they must send off for Mr. Featherston. You can remember that? The French boy, mind."

"I could remember it if I tried."

"Well, I'll give you the sixpence. And, look here—here's another sixpence. It is all the money I have. That shall be yours also, when you have done the errand."

I slipped one of the sixpences back into my pocket, holding out the other. But I have often wondered since that he did not stun me with a blow, and take the two. Perhaps he could not entirely divest himself of that idea of the "ambush." I did not like the leering look on his false face, as he sidled cautiously up towards the sixpence.

"Take a look at him; you can see him from the stile," I said, closing my hand over the sixpence while I spoke; "convince yourself that he is there, and that no trickery is meant. And, Raddy," I added, slowly opening the hand again: "perhaps you may want help one of these days yourself in some desperate need. Do this good turn for him, and the like will then be done for you."

I tossed him the sixpence. He stole cautiously to the stile, making a wide circuit round me to do it, glanced at Van Rheyn, and then made straight off in the right direction as fast as his legs would carry him, the dog barking at his heels.

Van Rheyn was better when I got back to him: his breathing easier, the mouth less blue; and his arms were no longer up, clutching the tree-trunk. Nevertheless, there was that in his face that gave me an awful fear and made my breath for a moment nearly as short as his. I sat down beside him, letting him lean against me, as well as the tree, for better support.

"Are you afraid, Charley? I hope they'll not be long."

"I am not afraid with this," he answered with a happy smile—and, opening his hand, I saw the little cross clasped in it.

Well, that nearly did for me. It was as though he meant to imply

he knew he was dying, and was not afraid to die. And he did mean it.

"You not comprehend?" he added, mistaking the look of my face—which no doubt was desperate. "I have kept the Saviour with me here, and he will keep me with him there."

"Oh—but Charley! You *can't* think you are going to die."

"Yes, I feel so," he said quite calmly. "My mother said, that last Sunday, I might not be long after her. She drew me close to her, and held my hand, and her tears were falling on mine. It was then she said it."

"Oh, Charley, how can I help you?" I cried out in my pain and dread. "If I could but do something for you!"

"I would like to give you this," he said, half opening his hand again, as it rested on his breast, just to show me the cross. "My mother has seen how good you have always been for me: she said she should look down, if permitted, to watch for me till I came. Would you please keep it to my memory?"

The hardest task I'd ever had in my life was to sit there. To sit there quietly—helpless. Dying! And I could do nothing to stay him! Oh, why did they not come! If I could but have run somewhere, or done something!

In a case like this the minutes seem as long as hours. Dr. Frost was up sooner than could have been hoped for by the watch, and Mr. Featherstone with him. Raddy did his errand well. Chancing to see the surgeon pass down the road as he was delivering the message at the house, he ran and arrested him. I saw his ill-looking face over the stile, as they came up, flung him the other sixpence, and thanked him too. The French master came running; others came: I hardly saw who they were, for my eyes were troubled.

The first thing that Featherstone did was to open Van Rheyn's things at the throat, spread a coat on the ground and put his head flat down upon it. But oh, there could be no mistake. He was dying: nearly gone. Dr. Frost knelt down, the better to get at him, and said something that we did not catch.

"Thank you, sir," answered Van Rheyn, panting again and speaking with pain, but smiling faintly his grateful smile. "Do not be sorrowful. I shall see my mother. Sir—if you please—I wish to give my cross to Johnny Ludlow."

Dr. Frost only nodded in answer. I daresay his heart was full.

"Johnny Ludlow has been always good for me," he went on, in his translated French. "He will guard it to my memory: the keepsake. My mother would give it to him—she has seen that Johnny stood by me ever since that first day."

Monsieur Fontaine spoke to him in French, and Van Rheyn answered in the same language. While giving a fond message for his

father, his voice grew feeble, his face more blue, and the lids slowly closed over his eyes. Dr. Frost said something about removing him to the house, but Featherstone shook his head. "Presently, presently."

"Adieu, sir," said Van Rheyn faintly to Dr. Frost, partly opening his eyes again. "Adieu, M. Fontaine. Adieu, all. Johnny, say my very best adieu to the boys; say to them it has been very pleasant lately; say they have been my very good comrades. Will you hold my hand?"

Taking his left hand in mine; the other had the gold cross in it; I sat on beside him. The dust was increasing so that we could no longer very well see his features in the dark coppice. My tears were dropping fast and thick, just as his tears had dropped that evening when I found him sitting at the foot of his bed.

Well, it was over directly. He gave one long deep sigh, and then another after an interval, and all was over. It seemed like a dream then in the acting; it seems, looking back, like a dream now.

He had died from the running at Hare and Hounds. The violent exercise had been too much for the heart. We heard later that the French family doctor had suspected the heart was not quite sound; and that was the reason of Monsieur Van Rheyn's written restrictions on the score of violent exercise. But, as Dr. Frost angrily observed, why did the father not distinctly warn him against that special danger: how was it to be suspected in a lad of hearty and healthy appearance? Monsieur Van Rheyn came over, and took what remained of Charles back to Rouen, to be laid beside his late wife. It was a great blow to him to lose his only son. And all the property went away from the Van Rheyn family to Mrs. Scott in India.

"I say, though," cried Parker, in a great access of remorse, speaking up amid the general consternation, when I gave them Charley's message that night, "we would never have worried him had we foreseen this. Poor Van Rheyn!"

And I have his gold cross by me to this day.

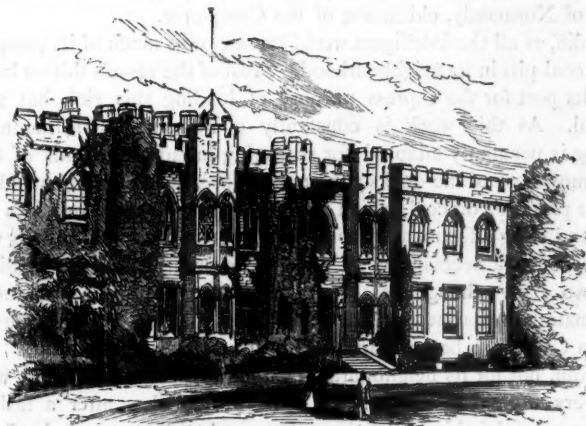
JOHNNY LUDLOW.

A WELSH RAMBLE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "A NIGHT IN A MONASTERY."

J. HAD lately gone down to Cardiff on a somewhat (to him) important occasion, and it had been agreed between us that it possible I should there join him for a week's holiday. Not that anything very delightful or attractive was to be looked for in Cardiff itself; but that was of no great moment. J. had received the command of a splendid ship, and his mission to the Welsh seaport was to join her.

The late skipper was still in command: not having the heart to



CARDIFF CASTLE.

resign control until the last moment. In a weak mood he had hastily made up his mind to retire from the service upon the urgent pleadings of his better-half, who thought it high time for him to settle down into a cozy old age, and a warm chimney corner. Like most men, he yielded to the soft womanly persuasion: but to an impartial observer it was plain to see that whilst the skipper with one eye watched the petticoats of the wife as they floated gracefully along the breezy streets of Cardiff, the other eye was twisted round the corner in amorous contemplation of a very different sailor, with a hankering gaze born of untimely repentance.

So until the very last moment the skipper did not mean to part company with the pride of his heart. It was not until that same last moment that he did so; when the good ship was being towed out of

dock and was passing through the locks. Then he stretched a long arm from the shore to the vessel, shook his successor by the hand with a vigorous grasp, and bade the whole craft and crew "good luck." Madam was on the opposite side the locks, patrolling to and fro like a sentinel; keeping guard over her husband, lest his weak heart and infirmity of purpose should treacherously give her the slip; and she should herself once more be as a widow, without the widow's privilege of seeking further consolation "if so disposed." But this is anticipating.

Cardiff has a good deal to boast of in the matter of pedigree or antiquity. Its history may be traced back some time before the commencement of the Christian era: to a time when it was invaded by the Romans.

Cardiff Castle, of which we give two illustrations, is the seat of the Marquis of Bute, and is rich in historical associations. Amongst the saddest and most interesting may be noted the imprisonment of Robert, Duke of Normandy, eldest son of the Conqueror.

Cardiff, as all the intelligent world knows, owes much of its prosperity to the coal pits in its neighbourhood. Most of the vessels thither bound, enter its port for the express purpose of loading this rich but shady mineral. As this work is constantly going on; as the manner of loading is peculiarly adapted for scattering broadcast clouds of dust; the atmosphere of the docks; the air you breathe; is impregnated with infinite particles of coal, which get down your throat, and into your eyes, and cling affectionately to you, as flour to a miller. A daily warm bath becomes a necessity to all who hold cleanliness next to godliness; and two daily changes of linen are by no means an evidence of effeminate fastidiousness. The decencies of life are great institutions, and in Cardiff, to be kept up, they must be strictly attended to.

Cardiff, but for its neighbouring coal-mines and its shipping, would be a very unimportant place. As it is, it flourishes, after a fashion: the commercial fashion: a fashion that no doubt pays well, but leaves small scope for the imagination to indulge in romantic tendencies. In Cardiff the higher flights of a poetical fancy had need be restrained; the mind, if it wishes to retain a healthy balance, must take a practical view of things. The science of shipping may be studied there: the science of meteorology, such as the conjunction of winds and waves, the moon's influence upon tides, the rising of stormy skies. Human nature, that most interesting problem, may be studied also, but scarcely in its grandest types. The latter are generally found in senates and observatories; in quiet, closed-in studies, whence issue to the world books whose aphorisms burn into the heart and brain, or melodies that fill the spirit with thoughts and visions of a better sphere. If the grander types alluded to be of a sentimental turn, they will be found contemplating past ages with folded arms and rapt gaze in the Roman amphitheatre, or the ruins of Herculaneum; or writing odes to the

moon and the stars in the dead of night and the solitude of Italian lakes.

But poetical soarings and ambitious imaginations are as a rule not abundant in seaport towns, where few cargoes more romantic than coals are stowed away, and few men dream of anything more inspiring than the poetry of calculation.

Human nature was no better in Cardiff than in other seaport towns. Perhaps no worse. There was the same overwhelming number of beer-shops and gin-drinking establishments, with for the most part two streams of humanity attendant upon each ; a stream ebbing and a stream flowing ; a stream negative and a stream positive—very positive indeed. There was the usual trace of sin and depravity upon many of the faces ; the same terrible language falling from many of the



CASTLE AND KEEP.

lips. From many a doorway, mingling with fumes of liquor, issued words that paled the cheek and froze the blood : and as the light, shooting forth its alluring beams, fell upon dishevelled hair and sin-stained faces, the eye met many a gaze from many a woman from which even a man with any modesty about him could only turn. Amongst the mingled crowd of men and women, the men nor looked nor seemed the worst.

Cardiff owes much of its prosperity, it has been already said, to its shipping and coal-mines. It boasts a tramway, a Turkish bath, a theatre, and other public institutions, including one or two excellent hotels. The shops are good ; the shopkeepers universally and especially civil, obliging, and well spoken. But, whatever may be the strong points of the good people of Cardiff, accuracy in imparting information cannot be regarded as one of them, if we may judge by the following instance.

My excellent and eccentric friend, W. (spoken of in a former paper in connection with a journey to Bristol by the *Flying Dutchman*), was staying at present at Weston-super-Mare, killing time and recruiting health after his pastoral duties. Of course we wanted to get him over to Cardiff, and show him the ship and the lions of the place.

* An excursion-boat was to run from Cardiff to Weston on the Wednesday morning, returning immediately to Cardiff, and going back to Weston in the afternoon. "A capital opportunity for W.," said I. "Affording a break in the monotony of our three existences."

"Well spoken," retorted J. "Though just now the good ship bears more the complexion if not the form of a coal barge than anything else."

But even this was not altogether a disadvantage, since it left great play for the imagination to work upon. So I telegraphed to W. "Come over on Wednesday afternoon, lunch with us, and go over J.'s ship."

"Too abrupt," said J. "Depend upon it he'll say No to that. He'll want further particulars as to lunch, or something of that sort. Can't you find some extra inducement to put in?"

A brilliant idea came up. I added: "You shall choose your own brand of champagne:" and looked anxiously at J. for approval.

"First-rate," said he, nodding. "Don't add anything to that inspiration. He'll come."

In a couple of hours' time, we received an answer: "Very happy to come on Wednesday. Veuve Clicquot." "My stars and g——" But perhaps I had better not give J.'s unrefined exclamation in extenso: sailors are not quite to be judged by ordinary rules, you know. He begged my pardon, and I would not have occasion to beg yours, dear reader. "Very happy indeed to see W.," continues J. "Delighted, I'm sure. But where the dev——" There I go again. It must be the spluttering of this ill-favoured pen that is noting down this strong language. "Where," corrected J., "by all that is recherché in the annals and vintages of wine, are we to alight on Veuve Clicquot in Cardiff?"

"We don't know all the resources of Cardiff," I returned, hopefully. "There is nothing like a woman for getting us into trouble or getting us out of it. Let us consult the landlady."

The landlady was equal to the occasion. Veuve Clicquot was unearthed eventually in triumph.

In an unlucky moment an idea struck us that it would be pleasant to run over to Weston in the steamer, for the sake of the blow, and the pleasure of escorting W. to Cardiff. A line was posted to him to that effect. "We will come over to meet you, and bring you back with us. The run across the Channel will be reviving after the relaxing (not to y coal-laden) air of Cardiff." At the boat-office they informed us

that the boat would start punctually at nine o'clock. Punctually at 8:45 on the Wednesday morning we were on the landing-stage. Punctually at 8:15 the boat had started; three quarters of an hour before the time specified. By this time she was almost at Weston. It is needless to record our state of mind. J. let off steam and made use of his tongue; so did I of mine. It brought back small consolation. All the office people could say was that the bills were not out, and the tide served earlier than they expected.

There was no help for it; the boat was gone and would be back at 10:15. W. would have to cross alone, and air his Latin by setting "Nunquam solus quam minus solus" to music. (He is very musical, and particularly partial to the Dead March in Saul.) We talked about the conspirators until 10:15, when the boat came in sight. At this moment a horrible suspicion took hold of me that W. would *not* cross alone. Sure enough the boat came in, the last man landed, and no W. appeared. "Just like him," I muttered. "And that mayonnaise and clicquot will be so much waste on the table. We who are not of a gustative turn of mind care nothing for such pampering food."

"Don't you believe it, and speak for yourself," said J., as contemptuously as he could, whilst his mouth watered. "Veuve Clicquot is an old friend of mine; and having been cut by one old friend, I don't mean to revenge myself on human nature by cutting another in return."

The next morning I received the following note:—

"DEAR W.,—The boat was there, and I was there, but you were not there. Of course I didn't come. As I walked gloomily back through the streets of Weston, I reflected upon the uncertainty of the fruition of all human hopes and desires." [This was evidently an allusion to the widow Clicquot.] "The reflection was depressing but edifying, as showing that too much reliance upon the movements of one's friends is not to be looked for in this lower world, where more changes are recorded than the changes of the moon. Kind regards to J. Hope we shall meet in London, but I have learned to doubt all things mundane.

"Yours, W.

"P.S.—If ever you show me up again in print, I'll put the matter in the hands of my family lawyer.

"P.P.S.—Having raised my expectations, I hope you will consummate them in town, in regard to *Veuve Clicquot*."

This note speaks for itself. Here we may safely leave W. to the reflections of his own conscience. Human nature at best is many-sided, and the heart deceitful above all thing.

Cardiff itself has no striking beauties of architecture or position to commend it. Like every town all over the kingdom, its suburbs are

widening. As population increases, so also must streets and houses increase. And population gets larger every day. Many souls emigrate; many die; but still more are born, live, and flourish: though how many of these do live is a matter of marvel if not of miracle to those who are familiar with the byways of London. It must be true, as says the French proverb, that there is a special providence for children. But for this, amongst the poorest and lowest, few surely would be reared. You constantly see pale, emaciated infants languishing in the arms of sisters or mothers; the latter dirty, ragged, unhealthy-looking, both morally and physically. The infants, apparently, are at death's door. If they belonged to a more refined state of life, they would die. But here they do not die. They struggle and fight upwards into a sort of existence; an existence which turns them out sickly, puny,



HIGH STREET, CARDIFF.

and stunted, perhaps, but yet with breathing-room in the world. There they are: the spark of life has conquered; though in how many cases would it seem better had the struggle ended differently! But yesterday I passed through a terrible bit of London; loathsome as a plague-spot. One of its most favoured courts rejoices in the name of *Frying Pan Alley*. You turn up *Frying Pan Alley*, which is a cul-de-sac, and not only can touch the walls on either side with your hands, but almost with your shoulders. The place is indescribably dreadful and filthy. During daylight it appears to be thickly peopled with women and babies—especially the latter. Yesterday a group of girls and infants lounged on its entrance-step. Could a sketch of them be given just as they then looked, it would read a lesson more eloquent than words can utter. The babies were lying flat, their eyes closed, with chalky, hollow faces, with black rims round their eyelids. The girls, varying from eight to eighteen or nineteen, were pitiable objects,

familiar, doubtless, with every species of crime and wretchedness, but to goodness all unknown. Growing up with the better part of nature, born with everyone in conjunction with the worse, perfectly unthought of, so that it inevitably dies out perhaps for ever. What an enormous amount of trouble we take to convert—say the Hottentots or the Patagonians! What societies; what subscriptions; what meetings; what preachings of sermons by great and popular men in the Church! Perhaps the one ought not to be neglected for the sake of the other. But if the Establishment were to rise up in a body to convert London, as it often rises up and shakes out its ruffled feathers for the benefit of the poor heathens; who after all will be judged only according to their lights; this seething metropolis would not still be the black hole, the fearful abode of sin and depravity, that it has been for countless ages: a state of things that in this enlightened, mission-loving nineteenth century is not on the wane, but on the increase.

Let us return to Cardiff, though it will be but to leave it again immediately. But you entered it by land, and now you must leave it by water. Just one week after my arrival at Cardiff, the ship was ready for sea. In that time she had discharged the ballast taken in to bring her round from London, and stowed away her cargo. At nine o'clock p.m. on Saturday night we passed through the locks.

It was very dark. At such times how mysterious seems the dark, deep water; how silent, how powerful, whether as friend or foe. Every plash of a rope or oar, every ripple, finds a corresponding echo in the mysterious recesses of the heart. There is something awesome in this immense mass of timber, gliding noiselessly through the water with so imperceptible a movement that you can only mark her progress as yet by the passing landscape. She merges from the locks into the wider basin, and so out into the yet wider roads. You draw a deep breath as you feel that you have left your native land, home, and home-ties behind you. For weeks or months to come, perhaps years, you are on the bosom of a treacherous element, though, happily, not at its mercy. In the power only of Him who orders the winds and holds the seas in the hollow of His hand.

The dark light upon the water gives it a cruel, glittering look in these first moments of link-snapping between sea and shore. But by-and-by the depth ceases to seem so cruel, and you gather from it even a certain repose. There is something in the vast deep which appears to fathom the very depths of the soul. It searches out its inward parts, and quickens them into stronger, more intense life. The spirit seems suddenly to have taken wings, and to be soaring away far out of the limits of the body, panting to accomplish a whole world-full of mighty deeds; and in the same moment, seeming to stand out in contrast with the boundless immensity of the ocean, comes the depressing realization of the shortness of the space of life given us in which to accomplish

those great deeds. The ocean, as an emblem of eternity, appeals to, and holds silent commune with, that part of us which is immortal. We have no wish to speak as we look around on the wide waste. Words grate upon us. The deepest emotions of our nature cannot be put into language. It is impossible for the finite part of man to grasp the infinite. Yet how many pause a moment to feel this? How often, for instance, say at the opera (music, too, is soul-touching) after a melody that would cause us to hide our faces if we were alone, are the deeper emotions of the soul shocked and shattered by a neighbour enthusiastically clapping his hands with the sound of a hundred castanets, and crying out with the lungs of a stentor, "Bravo! well sung, indeed!" That man has an ear to be tickled, perhaps, but not a soul to be touched. So in the midst of this vast water, whilst you stand trembling at the mystery of your own existence, a voice suddenly puts a question to your ear, suggested evidently by the self-same agency that appals you: "My dear sir, are you a disciple of Isaak Walton?"

Ahead of us, divided by certain fathoms of rope, is the tug, upon which we are for the present dependent, and which by-and-by is to prove itself a broken reed. It is moving slowly, and the plash, plash of its paddle-wheels smites upon the ear like the measured snort of a sea-monster. The fiery eyes of its lights are shining a warning upon advancing foes; not quite a superfluous precaution in these days of collisions and runnings-down.

When the ship was well away from the land, with no possibility of communication, all hands were mustered on the main deck for the purpose of going through the "roll-call." As each man answered to his name he passed out of the group from left to right before the captain. When it was ended, to the captain's surprise, not one man on the articles was missing: all had joined. This was better luck than past experience had dared to hope for. This over, the captain gave them a short address. In proportion as they were good men and true so would they find him a good master. After this the first and second officers proceeded to pick out alternately their own men—those who would be in their watch. By this process the crew is divided into two distinct companies, and system is maintained.

Soon after this, when eight bells had struck; midnight; I turned in for the night, and soon, for a time, slept the sleep of a quiet conscience.

Par parenthèse, do you understand how the bells of a ship are struck? For the benefit of the uninitiated, the science had better be recorded. It is less difficult to master than the pons asinorum, or thorough-bass, and unlike the mysteries of freemasonry, is not a secret to be kept inviolate. One bell is struck for every half-hour; at half-past twelve, one bell, at one o'clock, two bells, and so on up to eight bells, when they begin over again; so that eight bells are struck at the hours of four, eight, and twelve of the day and night. The bell is

struck every half-hour at one end of the ship, and has immediately to be answered by the bell at the other end. In a large vessel in the dark night hours, there is something weird in this chiming, and in the answering echo, struck by an invisible hand. As during the night the striking frequently woke me, so lying there in the bunk, the echo would be listened for and come as an assurance that there were watchers keeping a sharp look-out for the safety of the good ship. Would that in the waves of life, the eye of Faith was ever as ready to hear the chiming of the Safety Bell!

The tug, it has been said, proved as a broken reed. The next morning was wet and blowing; it was of no use to turn out early. J. had been on deck occasionally since six o'clock; but more to reconnoitre than for anything there was to be done. As long as the pilot is on



EAST BASIN, CARDIFF.

board the captain is supposed to leave everything to him: for the time he is as a guest in his own home. We were to have been at Lundy Island at ten o'clock, and here, at nine, having made some way in the night, we were drifting back towards Cardiff.

"A pretty state of things," exclaimed J., coming from above, "wind and tide against us; the tug not strong enough to do her work. Instead of towing us out to sea, we are dragging her back to Cardiff."

No less startling than true. The Cardiff tugs are not strong; they are seldom called upon to tow so fine a ship as this out of the channel. Our tug this morning was as helpless as a baby in the hands of a giant. At eleven o'clock she altogether gave up the struggle, detached herself from us, and steamed away. The pilot, fearing for the safety of the vessel in these narrow waters, had all the sails set and put back and anchored just outside the Penarth Roads, within ten miles of Cardiff.

This was an unfortunate start, but the patience of those most con-

cerned was yet more to be tried. The wind was dead against their putting out to sea. Until it changed they would have to remain at anchor.

There we were, beating about in the narrow waters of the Channel, in sight of the Flat Holme and steep Holme rocks : in the distance the land stretching down, so that in imagination the eye could fix itself on the very spot of Hallam's grave, whilst memory repeated over and over again those words of "In Memoriam,"

"Break, break, break, at the foot of thy crags, O sea."

There were the crags and there was the sea ; and though we could not hear the surge breaking over the rocks, it was quite possible to do so in fancy.

Each time the ship made a fresh start, there was a tremendous commotion in getting her ready for it. All hands were sent forward to raise the anchor and the forty-five fathoms of chain-cable that connected it with the vessel. This took a long while, and the monotonous song with which the sailors kept time, sounded to the unfamiliar ear very much like a dirge or a miserere. The anchor up, the men would climb the rigging, and hang on to the spars and ropes aloft like bees to a hive. The sails would gradually unfurl, and flap in the wind with a noise like the report of musketry. The pulling of ropes and squaring of sails and the shouts and song of the men, mingled confusedly with the rushing winds, and the ship would gradually swing round, pitching and tossing in the restless waves. Things in the saloon went reeling from one side to the other, and legs would become unsteady. The sky overhead was dark and lowering ; clouds hurried past, not so very many feet out of reach. A cold, drizzling rain, which penetrated to the marrow, fell. The Bristol Channel was not at its best. But for one evening it all cleared off. The land came out splendidly ; the clouds disappeared, and gave place to blue sky. The setting sun gilded the water, and the hills, and the rocks, and went down in a red glow. We expanded like roses in a June morning. All nature smiled, and how delightful the contrast ! I exclaimed at the glories of the sky ; glories that J., familiar with tropical sunsets, treats with sovereign contempt.

Between the Saturday night and the Thursday morning, the ship twice made a start after her first attempt. Each time the treacherous wind, for a moment favourable, veered round again, as if determined to play us ill. There was nothing for it but to put back just outside the roads. The pilot declared he had never in his life before met with such an experience at that time of the year.

On the Thursday morning we were still within ten miles of Cardiff. The weather had almost without intermission been "dirty." This morning it had ceased raining, but the sea was rough and chopping. I began to think there might be no end of it. It seemed ignominious to go back to Cardiff, even if a chance offered. On the other hand it was

equally impossible to stay there for ever. Work awaited me in town; friends at home might begin to fancy me drowned or gone off to the Cape (some of them actually did think so, and worried themselves into a fever, just as poor, gentle Miss Sophia worried herself into a high pitch of screaming hysterics when I disappeared down the pit's mouth). Finally I determined that if an opportunity of getting ashore did present itself, it should be seized upon.

Within five minutes, strangely enough, the occasion turned up. A pilot-cutter hove in sight, was hailed, and came alongside. In less than no time I had packed up, swung into the rigging of the cutter, and dropped into her, bag and baggage. Hasty farewells, and we were off, making for Cardiff. Gradually time and the wide sea separated us more and more from the noble ship, until she could only be seen with a glass; and finally, turning a corner, became lost to our view. I was



ENTRANCE TO BUTE DOCK.

landed at Cardiff just in time to have a comfortable bath, and catch the express to London.

Thus, with a certain sense of failure, ended my first sojourn in the Bristol Channel. But far greater fret and worry was going on in the good ship I had left riding at anchor in its unsteady waters. We quitted Cardiff on the night of the 1st of August. The next morning, at ten, the ship should have passed Lundy Island. I left her on Thursday the 6th inst., and she did not finally pass Lundy Island, and really start on her voyage, until Sunday the 16th inst. Picture to yourself that fortnight's irritation; the wear and tear of nerve-tissue to a newly appointed commander, bent on making the fastest voyage on record. How dependent they are on winds, those who "go down to the sea in ships, and occupy their business in great waters!"

Here is an extract from a letter received from J. only a few days ago. It will tell the reader how they fared after I left them, buffeting about

the channel, longing for fair winds as a stranded crew longs for daylight:—

“It was fortunate for you, as far as weather was concerned, that you left when you did. The very next day it came on to blow twice as hard, with cold, disagreeable rain, which lasted, without any intermission, until the day we finally sailed. I say finally, because we again made two separate attempts to get away which proved futile, and twice we dragged our anchors until we were obliged to pick them up and beat back to our place, with 125 fathoms of cable out. It was something awful at times. You remember the American that was lying abreast of us? She dragged from the place with both anchors down, and brought up, goodness knows where, but turned up again all safe afterwards. Well, we got under weigh, and I am only sorry now, and have been so ever since, that you left us at all, for you would have enjoyed the view of such a panorama, or whatever you choose to call it, as seldom falls to a sailor's experience more than twice in a life-time—to that of a landsman, perhaps never. The steady old pilot, with his antediluvian pantaloons, had sole charge, and we had as good a ‘smashing match’ the night before we made Lundy as anyone could wish for, carrying whole topsails through a living gale of wind, the rain pouring down in sheets, and the sea making clean breaches over the unfortunate ship. But we were obliged to do it, for the wind hauled a bit when we were we could not tell how far off or how close to the ‘lee shore,’ and it became indispensable to ‘carry her off,’ as the term goes. And right gallantly she did her work. You would have enjoyed it! The glorious plunging, hissing, and slashing of the good old iron-sides, as if she were battling and wrestling impatiently and obstinately with every enraged sea that opposed her headlong career. The motion, given time and circumstances, was superb—was awfully splendid—but to a landsman would have seemed frightful in the extreme. And the first instant that the utter blackness of the night—which had throughout been rendered more weird-like and dense on account of the green spray on the starboard bow, and the red spray on the port (you remember our lights); for nothing else was visible except the phosphorescent blaze of the breaking seas; the very instant that this blackness gave place to the first and faintest grey glimmer of dawn, there was no eye that was not stretched anxiously away to leeward, dreading to find what we had been struggling to escape, and what, with God's blessing, we did escape, the crue rocks under our lee.

“But the night over, and daylight or daydark set in—for the torrent of rain continued, though the wind moderated—the question naturally was, where were we? So we found our depth and stood over towards the English side, and at last made out the shape of the land close to us through the rain. The worthy old-fashioned pilot recognized it for the land lying nearest Lundy Island, the latter in fact only

fifteen miles away to the N.W. So away we went again to hunt it up, and—missed it!

“Here was a go! The wind was more fair than it had been, and the pilot was on board. No land, no boat in sight, and no possibility of picking up either again without running back and repeating the previous night’s experience. So I called a council and very quickly came to the conclusion to take the pilot with me, until such time as we should meet a ship. I took charge, made sail, and stood away to the N.W., clear of the Welsh land, as we thought. But at three o’clock in the afternoon (now comes the panorama) the rain which had never ceased to fall in perfect sheets, rendering the day almost as dark as an ordinary night, suddenly, and without the slightest notice beyond a glare for about two minutes—which had the effect of drawing all our attention to the N.W. quarter—passed over us, wind and all, and settled away to leeward of us, black and opaque as any wall, and leaving us, in less time than it has taken me to write it, becalmed on the bluest water, and under the clearest and most glorious of blue skies; without a cloud to be seen, except the frightful chaos to leeward; right underneath the cliffs of Tenby Castle; the sun in all his splendour just dipping behind the battlements. Tenby Bay, and the town just to the right of it, was a marvellous picture, and the land on both sides, stretching away till lost in space on the clear horizon, presented an amount of beauty and colouring that Turner himself would scarcely have dared to attempt. There we waited for a cutter we had signalled to come off for the pilot, who, now that I had time to look at him, presented a truly deplorable appearance, cruelly augmented by the glory of the sunshine. An object I should have pitied could I have stopped laughing. However, whilst the cutter was dawdling off, for it was almost a calm, he went below, and after a shave, a wash, and a collar, you wouldn’t have known him. He looked like a new pilot out of a bandbox. The old boy had actually brought a rig-out with him to make a dandy of himself when he went ashore. He smiled with satisfaction at his own juvenile appearance, and his joy was complete. I handed him over clear expenses and a note of thanks, and we parted with mutual regret. *Sic transit gloria pilot!*”

“Then was the time I would have given something to have brought you down with us. To have landed you in that calm, beautiful bay; where you might have seen us make a start with all sail set, and everything around delightful. What a jolly journey you would have had from Wales, after your late experiences and the excitement of having been run away with! Well, we started, cleared the land, weathered Scilly, and got becalmed in the Bay of Biscay. Then away again to the westward of Madeira and the Cape de Verdes, light winds all the way. Over to Cape Palmas, with a southerly wind, then across the line, and through the S.E. trades, to windward of Trinidad, and then away

straight for the Cape, where we arrived on the 52nd day out, the fastest passage of the season. Just fancy! we never shortened sail all the passage! With the exception of lowering the royals for a signal now and then, what sail we set in Tenby Bay we carried to the Cape!"

And now, reader, if you have with any small degree of interest or pleasure (it is more than I could expect) followed me so far into the regions of South Wales, the coal-begrimed docks of Cardiff, the unromance of Frying Pan Alley, and the chops of the Bristol Channel, I will, by your leave, next month take you northwards, amongst the undulating hills and valleys and rippling streams of Merionethshire, and the quiet, beautiful sea of Barmouth, whither fate conveyed me some weeks after leaving Cardiff. There we can take a glance at the ruins of Harlech, from whose hoary battlements you get so grand a view of the chain of Welsh mountains, that boasts Snowdon for its crowning glory, and hear the rippling and rushing water as we climb the torrent walk of Dolgelly.

Upon which, dear reader, as the showman says, I make my bow and the curtain falls.

C. W. W.



ABIDE IN ME.

DEAR Lord, we would obey Thy sweet command,
 And, though unworthy, still in Thee abide;
 We would for ever hold Thy guiding hand,
 For, quitting Thee, whom should we have beside?
 Who builds without Thee, builds upon the sand,
 A house too frail to bear life's stormy tide;
 Who builds in Thee, builds on the rock-girt strand,
 And, when the tempest bursts, has where to hide.
 Oh, Eldest Brother of man's guilty race,
 Who quitted Heav'n to dwell with us on earth,
 That we in Thine might see our Father's face,
 And in Thy death might find our great new birth!—
 Oh, living Vine! no other life have we;
 The branches die abiding not in Thee.

EMMA RHODES.

THE GRAVE IN EGYPT.

MANY a man would have voted the place "stupid," but to Ralph Arnold it seemed a very haven of repose. He had been a wanderer on the face of the earth for ten years. Having no one's pleasure to consult but his own, his nearer relatives being dead, he had gone wherever his roving fancy had led him. Had idled in the gay French capital, moralized in the Eternal City, dreamed in Venice, lingered on the Rhine, climbed the pyramids of Egypt, and fought the tiger in the jungles of India. But he had come back to his native land travel-weary, now; and when his guiding star chanced to settle over the pleasant little village of Grassmead, or, as he christened it, "Sleepy Hollow," he resolved to halt and rest. Yes, here he would pitch his tent for the summer, and fish, and imagine himself a boy again, if he could.

One day in the month of June, when all the pretty gardens were radiant with colour and sweet with the perfume of roses, Mr. Arnold went out to fish. Seated on a moss-grown log, trying to beguile the finny tribe into the belief that the nice worm he had thrown into the water was only a worm and nothing more, he was startled by a fresh young voice, evidently addressing him.

"I say it is a downright shame to entice the poor little fishes to their death in that way! Now, if I were a siren, I should certainly lure you to destruction for your cruelty."

Dropping his rod, utterly oblivious or indifferent to the fact that a fine fish was on the hook, Mr. Arnold turned to see whence the voice came. A young girl who might have been taken for a vision of Flora herself, so bedecked was she with flowers, was leaning against the trunk of a tree behind, regarding him with a look of mock severity. She had a wreath of roses entwined carelessly round her hat; a little basket that swung from her arm was filled with wild flowers and mosses, while from one shoulder trailed a long, green vine, in vivid contrast to the white dress she wore. Evidently she had been thus decking herself out for pastime.

"I fear you would have found it an easy task, fair lady," Ralph said, bowing gallantly. And at the sound of his voice, the first sight of his half-turned face, the girl started back a step or two.

"Oh, I beg your pardon," she cried, in some confusion. "I mistook you for some one else. I thought it was my cousin, Mr. Greyson."

"I am very much indebted to Mr. Greyson," returned Arnold.

"I think the sun must have blinded me," she observed, in a vexed tone; and she caught the look of involuntary admiration that sat in the stranger's handsome eyes.

"What a bewildering little beauty it is," was running through Ralph Arnold's thoughts. "And how strangely familiar her face seems to me!" Where on earth had he seen that fair face, framed in its beautiful golden hair? Not for a few moments could he tell; but all at once the recollection came to him. He was back, in thought, in the Vale of Chamouni: he and his fellow traveller, Karl Douglas. They were preparing to make the ascent of Mont Blanc, and Douglas—as if the prevision lay upon him of what was to be ere many weeks went by—took a beautifully painted miniature from his breast and showed it to him. The lovely golden hair, and the steady look in the violet eyes, had never left Arnold's memory.

"Should anything happen to me," Douglas had said, "send this back to the lady whose address you will find outside a packet of letters among my traps. Send both to her, Arnold; portrait and letters."

Arnold had done so. And he now certainly thought he saw the same face before him in this young lady's. But he would set the doubt at rest.

"I believe," he said, taking off his hat, "I have the honour of addressing Miss Kaulbach?"

"That is my name," she answered, in surprise.

"I am Ralph Arnold."

The look of wonder died out of the blue eyes, and a little wave of sadness swept over the fair face. "Then you were——"

"Karl Douglas's friend and fellow traveller," he said, interrupting her, and he was standing close to her now. "I was with him when he died."

Christine Kaulbach held out a hand so white that the blue veins seemed to stain it.

"I cannot meet as a stranger one who was the friend of Karl Douglas," she said, as Arnold bowed low over the white hand. "Are you staying in the village, Mr. Arnold?"

"Just at present I am. I have taken the lodgings at Mead Farm for a month, but shall probably remain all the summer. But—I do not think it was to this place that I addressed the letter to you?"

"No, no. My aunt has only removed here for the summer—like yourself. We are at the white house just outside the village, Rose Lawn."

"And—may I venture to call on you?" he inquired, as she was moving away.

"Indeed yes," was the cordial answer. "My aunt, Mrs. Cuff, will

be pleased to see you: and I shall like to hear what you can tell me about Mr. Douglas."

On a garden chair at Rose Lawn, the following evening, sat Mr. Arnold and Miss Kaulbach. Their voices were low and sad: there seemed ever to be a sadness in the gathering twilight. The stars were coming out after the hot day: the moon was rising behind the trees.

He was telling Christine Kaulbach of the lover—her lover—who had died during their tour in Egypt, not many weeks subsequent to that well-remembered day at Chamouni. Telling her of the firm friendship that had existed between himself and that lover; of their happy Bohemian wanderings; and lastly, of his friend's death—how the last word on poor Karl's lips had been "Christine."

"We dug him a grave under two stately palms, Miss Kaulbach. When I left, the scarlet poppies were blooming over him."

It was a mournful story; a mournful theme. When it was ended, and Arnold's voice died off into silence, nothing was to be heard save the splash of the pretty fountain and the chirp of a myriad insects in the dew-wet grass. "I am so glad you were with him when he died," said Christine at length, looking up with tear-gemmed eyes. "So very glad that he had one friend to go with him to the entrance of the Valley of Shadows."

But, before more was said, Mrs. Cuff called to them. Tea was waiting.

Ralph Arnold's heart was strangely stirred as he went down the dewy, scented walk that June evening, pausing to pluck a water-lily wet with the spray from the fountain. "It is like her," he thought, the "her" meaning the blue-eyed girl he had just left.

Often and often after this did Mr. Arnold call at Rose Lawn, and always found a welcome. And so, through all the glowing, ardent summer they were together; and what the result? The polished man of the world found his heart was not invulnerable. And she? Of course she did not love him. How could she, when her heart was in the grave in Egypt? But it was pleasant to be with him; he was a thorough gentleman; and he gave her wonderful word-pictures of other countries. Above all, he had been the friend of Karl Douglas. It was a sort of mournful pleasure to hear him talk of Karl, she said to herself. But, had she questioned her heart honestly, she might have found that the pleasure lay in listening to the low music of the wonderful voice, rather than in hearing of her dead lover.

And did Ralph Arnold despair? Not at all. It suited his dreamy, poetic nature, this sort of dream-life they were living.

But this lotus-eating existence could not go on for ever. One evening Ralph found Christine seated on the banks overlooking the river. The

girl still persuaded herself that her heart was sacred to the memory of her lost love. Mr. Arnold was a dear friend, nothing more. She did not realize that the dark deep eyes were fast crowding out the memory of the merry blue ones asleep under the palms in that far-off plain. Seating himself below her, the young man looked up at the face dearer to him than all the world.

"Of what were you thinking?" he asked. "Sighing after some far-off dream of paradise?"

"Oh, no," she laughed, "I was not sighing at all, and as for my thoughts, they are not worth repeating. But here," handing him the book she had been reading, "is something that will be vastly more entertaining and instructive. Will you read to me?"

"I beg pardon, Miss Christine," he returned, with a smile, "but I'm too lazy to read. I believe the soft languor of the nearly Indian summer has stolen into my veins. I find myself unwilling to do anything more energetic than smoking or dreaming, or perhaps talking, if you will listen." And, stretched on the mossy carpet, his head resting on one shapely hand, he did look the personification of handsome indolence.

"Well, I don't wish to encourage idleness, and I object to smoking; so if you will not read, Mr. Arnold, you must talk," Christine said, with pretty imperiousness.

"What shall I tell you, Christine?" he asked, toying with the silken tassels of her glove, which he had picked up from the ground where it had fallen. It was only within the last few days that he had taken to call her "Christine."

"Tell me of Germany, the home of Schiller and Goethe. Germany is my fatherland, you know, Mr. Arnold."

"Yes, I know it. But you have not lived there?"

"No. My father died when I was very young; and my mother—she was English—brought me here. Karl had relatives in Germany too, and loved it. I wish I could go there! Please talk to me about it, Mr. Arnold."

"Very well, Miss Christine; we will imagine ourselves in the 'Fatherland': the hills yonder, wrapped in purple mists, and the river at our feet will help the illusion." And, leaning back against the mossy bank until his dark locks almost mingled with the golden ones that rippled down over the girl's shoulders, he painted such a mellow golden picture of Germany, that Christine declared she could hear the ripple of the blue Rhine and see the peasants gathering grapes on the purple-clad hills of Bingen.

"I envy you your travels," she said with a sigh. "It has been the one dream-wish of my life to see all those beautiful places. But I suppose it will never be realized."

"And why not, Christine?" he asked, starting up and speaking upon

impulse. "Why not see them with me—as my wife? I have loved you always, Christine, since the first moment we met."

The girl's heart gave one mighty throb of pain. Or was it joy? Even then she did not know, as she looked with pitying eyes on the eager face so near her own.

"Oh, Mr. Arnold, I never dreamed of this! I thought you knew that I had no love to give; that my heart was in that grave you made under the palm-trees. I was Karl Douglas's promised wife."

"And I was his dearest friend," returned Arnold. "I would not wrong Karl Douglas for worlds; but he is dead, Christine, and it is no wrong done to him to tell you of my love now. Oh! my darling, if you could love me I would serve as Jacob did for Rachel, and wait as many years." And there was a world of passionate feeling in the misty depths of the dark eyes.

The girl's own eyes were misty as she answered him: answered him in perplexity and pain.

"Oh, I am sorry, but it cannot be. You can only be my dearest friend, Mr. Arnold. You will be that, will you not?"

"Always," he said, almost crushing the hand he held, as he let it fall in her lap. "But, oh! Christine, if you could have loved me!"

She simply shook her head, and a grave silence supervened. Both were looking at the distant hills. Mr. Arnold saw he had spoken too soon; and he took up the book beside them.

Opening it at hazard, he saw some lines, and read them out in a low, musical voice. They were not too good, but they seemed appropriate.

"Flow down, cold rivulet, to the sea,
Thy tribute wave deliver,
No more by thee my steps shall be
For ever and for ever."

Why is it that we never appreciate anything until we are about to lose it, or have lost it? As he read, it suddenly occurred to Christine that she could not live away from the man at her side. The love that had been slumbering in her heart all the summer, rose up unmistakably now, and she knew what it meant.

"Yes, I am going away," Ralph said, answering the mute question in her eyes as they stood up together. "I must go away, Christine. We have had a beautiful midsummer dream: but I wanted more than the dream, you see. And now nothing remains but to try and find the fabled river of the Ancients, and drink and forget. Forgive me," he added, noticing for the first time that Christine was weeping, "if I have said anything to wound you; believe me, I did not mean it."

Christine crushed back the tears. Oh, if she could only tell him the truth! But shame held her back. What would he think of her? Would he not despise her for being weak and silly, and not knowing

her own mind. Alas, yes!—and she turned away in the direction of her home.

Mr. Arnold picked up the broad-brimmed hat, and they put it on together over the bright golden hair. Christine was trembling. Never should he tie them more: and—he stooped and left a kiss on the red lips. Was he much to blame?

“Forgive me, Christine; it was the first, it will be the last. Are you offended?”

Offended! when her very soul went out to him in that kiss.

He went home with her. Mrs. Cuff was not visible, and they were alone. Christine, feeling unsettled, ill at ease, went to the piano.

“Will you sing for me?” he asked.

“What shall it be?”

“Anything you please.”

Then she sang a tender little song of farewell. There was a suspicious tremble in her voice, but she bore up till she came to the words—

“After sweet still comes the bitter,
And the moments though so fleet,
To the brim were filled with pleasure,
Now they’re growing bitter-sweet.”

Then there was a break down. The golden head had fallen on the piano, and tears like rain were deluging the ivory keys. In a moment Ralph was at her side, his hand on the bowed head.

“Is it bitter-sweet, Christine? Are you sorry for me?”

No answer, but he could feel the slight form quiver as if in agony. A great wave of joy swept over him. Could it be possible that the girl cared for him, after all?

“Christine!” he cried, “if you do not speak, I shall go mad with joy. Can it be that you do care for me a little, after all?” Still no answer. Lifting the bowed head, he sought to read the girl’s face. The cheeks were hot with blushes; the tear-wet eyes were closed.

“Christine!” he murmured. “Little white dove! Mine at last!”

He drew her head to his shoulder. He seemed hardly certain yet.

“My darling, won’t you speak to me! Just one word!”

“Ralph!”

It was only one word: but it sounded very low and sweet: and Ralph Arnold was at rest.

Ah Karl! Karl Douglas! The grass is green over thy grave; and a warm, living lover has taken thy place in the heart sworn to be true to thee in time and eternity.

It is not pleasant to think that we shall so soon be forgotten when once we have passed out of sight for ever. Nevertheless it is the way of the world. And as to the grave in that far-off Egyptian land—the ind dews of heaven will keep it green.

PARKWATER.*

BY THE AUTHOR OF "EAST LYNNE."

CHAPTER I.

BRINGING-UP.

IN a certain quiet street of London, chiefly if not entirely filled by lawyers and their offices, there flourished some years ago the eminent firm of Lyvett, Castlerosse, and Lyvett. An extensive practice had they; and some other firms in the street would watch with an envious eye the shoals of letters and deeds delivered at their door by the morning postman, wishing only a tenth part of such shoals would come to them. The partners bore the character of honourable men; and certainly they were so. The three floors in the house were consecrated to business. The ground-floor was chiefly appropriated to clerks; on the first-floor were the private and consulting rooms of the partners; and on the next story were clerks again. This left free the kitchens, which were under ground, and the attics in the roof, in which apartments dwelt a man of the name of May, his wife, and daughter. May was the trusty porter or messenger of the firm, took care of the house on Sundays and at nights, and was much esteemed by his employers as an honest, respectable servant. Mrs. May cleaned the offices, made the fires, and scoured the stairs; and Miss May was a damsel of ten years old. She was being brought up—well, we shall see how.

Mr. Lyvett, the first partner in the firm, was a wealthy man. Apart from the proceeds arising from a long and successful practice (which had come down to him from his father), his wife, who was of very good family, had brought him a large fortune. They lived at the West End, and mixed more in fashionable life than it is usual for lawyers to do. All Mrs. Lyvett's connections lay amid it; and Mr. Lyvett himself was of rather good descent. Their family consisted of two sons, James and Frederick, and some daughters. James was already taken into partnership, and his name was the third in the firm. He was married, and had a house of his own. Frederick, the younger son, was only a boy yet.

One night in winter, a clerk chanced to remain at the office beyond the usual hour. When the rest left he was left behind. It was young Mr. Jones. He was just articled, had copied a deed carelessly and imperfectly, and so was ordered to remain over-hours and copy it again.

* This Story appeared many years ago in one of the first-class periodicals of the day. It has now been rearranged, and partly rewritten for the ARGOSY.

A strict disciplinarian was Mr. Rowley, the overlooking clerk of Lyvett, Castlerosse, and Lyvett. The porter was out that evening, and Mrs. and Miss May were in the kitchen, the former washing up the tea-things, the latter seated on a low chair, and devouring by the blaze of the fire, the fresh number of *Caterpillar's Penny Weekly Repository of Romance*: Caterpillar being a popular writer with the million.

"Anything new there, Sophiar?" asked the mother.

"Law, ma, yes! Such a splendid tale! 'The Knight of the Blood Red Hand.' It begins beautiful."

"You'll try your eyes, reading by firelight, Sophiar. Come to the candle."

"I wish you wouldn't make a fuss," was Miss Sophia's answer.

"You'll not read long, I can tell you. As soon as ever I have finished these tea-things, I'm a-going to clear the pianer, and you'll come and practise."

The young lady gave a jerk with her shoulders, and a kick with her feet, both of which movements might be taken as emblematic of rebellion. Mrs. May was a foolish woman. To say the least of it, she was so in regard to her child. All her own spare time was devoted to the devouring of a certain kind of pernicious literature, supplied then as extensively to the "million" as it is now; perhaps more so. It served to fill her head with the most ridiculous notions; and May, her husband, sanctioned them. Mrs. May had resolved that the child, Sophia, should be brought up "a lady, educated and raised above her spere," as she rather often expressed it. In this resolve, she was upheld not only by May, but by her sister, a Miss Foxaby, who was a lady's-maid in a very fine family somewhere up West. Sophia had no objection in the world; she was already an incipient coquette, inordinately vain; and quite as much at home in the intricacies of the *Weekly Repository of Romance* as her mother was. Poor child! Poor child! its pernicious teachings were growing with her growth, and strengthening with her strength.

Mrs. May was as good as her word. She cleared the square piano, which appeared to be laden with miscellaneous articles of culinary utility, not generally found in association with pianos, opened it, and put one of the wooden chairs before it. Miss Sophia, however, declined to disturb herself.

"What was the good of your father a-buying of the hinstrument, and what's the good of your having a genus for music, if you don't practise?" demanded Mrs. May. "Come, miss, no shuffling. And you have not looked at your book-lessons yet."

"Ma, how you do bother!"

"Come this minute, I say, or I'll put you to bed—and give them stupid romances to me," added Mrs. May, whisking the leaves out of the child's hand.

"You don't call them stupid when you read them yourself; and *you* don't like to be disturbed at them, though you disturb me," raved the child, in a voice between screaming and sobbing. "The other night when father kept asking for his supper, you were in the thick of the 'Blighted Rose,' and you wouldn't stir from it, and he had to get out the bread and cheese himself, and fetch the beer!"

"Never you mind that, miss. You come to the pianer as I bid you. It's not your place to reflect on me."

Sophia, finding resistance useless, flung some books on the chair, to make it higher, and flung herself atop of them, dashing into what she called "the scales" and her mother "the jingles." Mrs. May drew a chair before the fire, placed her feet on the iron fender, snuffed the candle on the table behind her, and opened the publication she had taken from her daughter. Before, however, she was fairly immersed in its beauties, or the first few bars of the jingles had come to an end, a tremendous noise overhead caused them both to start.

"Sakes alive!" uttered Mrs. May—a favourite exclamation of hers, "what's that?"

A somewhat prolonged noise, as of a stool or chair being moved violently about, was now heard. Sophia jumped off the books.

"Mother! suppose it should be an apparition!"

"Suppose it should be a robber!" was the more practical remark of Mrs. May. "He may have stolen in to kill us, while he walks off with the law papers. I *daren't* go and see."

"I'll go and see," answered Sophia; "I'm not afraid of robbers; and I don't suppose they'd hurt me." She took the candle from the table, hurried fearlessly upstairs, and knocked at the front office door.

Mr. Jones, the young clerk, not being used to solitary evening employment, had dropped asleep over his work, with his stool on the balance. Certain sounds caused him to awake with a start, when he and his stool went down together. Picking himself and his stool irascibly up, he inflicted on the latter sundry bumps on the floor, by way of revenge, and was just settling to his copying again, when somebody knocked at his door.

"Come in," cried he, sullenly.

Very much astonished he looked when the knocker presented herself. A blue-eyed, pretty child, with flaxen hair that curled on her shoulders. Dressed well, she would have been an elegant child; but, dressed as she was, in all the colours of the rainbow, flaunty, dirty, and with a profusion of glass-beads glittering about her as necklace and bracelets, she looked like a little itinerant actress at a country fair.

"Why! who and what are you?" demanded the young gentleman.

"If you please, we did not know anybody was left," replied Sophia. "When the noise came, we thought it was a robber got in, so I came to see, but ma was afraid."

"Who on earth's 'ma'?" repeated Mr. Jones, unable to take his eyes off the child.

"My ma. Down stairs."

"Do you live here?"

"Yes," said she, drawing herself up. "I am Miss May."

"Oh, indeed!" returned the young man. "Was not that a piano tinkling? It was the sound of that startled me up, and sent the stool off its legs. The first time I ever heard of a piano in a lawyer's office."

"It's mine. Father bought it for me."

"Yours! Where do you keep it?"

"In the kitchen," answered the little girl. "We moved the dresser out into the back place where the copper is, to make room for it. It's opposite the windows, and I practise at night when I come home from school."

"Why don't you give us a serenade in the daytime?" demanded young Mr. Jones, delighted at the amusement which appeared to be striking up. "We might get up a waltz when the governors are out."

Miss May shook her head. "Father says it must *never* be opened till everybody's gone; the gentlemen would not like it. So ma keeps dishes and things atop of it all day, for fear I should forget and unlock it, when I'm at home from school at twelve o'clock."

"Well, this is a rum go!" muttered Mr. Jones to himself. "How many brothers and sisters have you, child?"

"I have not got any of either. And that's why ma says she can afford to spend more upon me. I'm to be a lady when I grow up."

"Thank you, my little girl, for the information. You look like one. I should say you might be taken for an Arabian-Nights princess: only you are too smart."

The child took the mocking compliment to be meant in earnest. She bridled her head, and her unoccupied hand stole up to twirl round the ends of her pretty ringlets. In the endowment of vanity, Nature has been prodigal to many of us, but she had been remarkably so to Sophia May.

"Sophiar!" called out a voice, timid and panting, from the lower regions. "Sophiar! What is it?"

"Who is that?" quickly asked Mr. Jones.

"That's ma. She —"

"Sophiar, I say! Who are you talking to? Who *is* there?" repeated the voice.

"Ma," answered the child, putting her head out at the door to speak, "it's one of the gentlemen, not yet gone."

Up raced Mrs. May, flurried and dubious. Mr. Jones recognized her as the lady he had seen on her hands and knees, cleaning the front door-step the first morning he came, when he had misunderstood the

clerks' time, and had arrived an hour too early. She knew him as the young clerk recently entered, whose friends were intimate with the Lyvetts.

"Bless me, sir! I should not have took upon myself to send Sophiar in here, but we thought everybody was gone, and was alarmed at the noise. Sophiar, miss"—changing her tone to a very angry one—"when you saw it was all right, why didn't you come away again directly?"

"Don't put yourself out, Mrs. May; she has done no harm. What time do you get this office open in the morning?" he added, as if struck with some sudden thought.

"About half-past seven, sir, these dark mornings. I begin with this floor first. But I get all my sweeping over and the fires alight, before I sit down to my breakfast."

"Then I'm blest if I won't knock off for to-night, if I can get in at that hour," ejaculated Mr. Jones. "I shall have time to finish this beastly thing before old Rowley comes. But he had best mind, again, how he gives me my day's writing to do over twice, for I won't stand it. Good-night to you, Dame May. Put out the gas."

"Sophy," said Mrs. May, when they returned to the kitchen, "did he hear the sound of the pianer?"

Sophy nodded in the affirmative.

"What did he say?"

"He asked if the piano was here; and I told him it was, and it was ours."

"Then you were a little ape for your pains. You should have told him that it was a sound from the next house, and stood to it that it was if he'd disputed it. Your father don't want the Mr. Lyvetts and Mr. Castlerosse to know of the pianer; they'd make a fuss perhaps. Never scruple to tell a fib, child, in a necessary cause."

"Can I have that paper now?" asked Sophia.

"No," snapped Mrs. May, "I have hardly begun it. Get on with your jingles."

From the above little episode of one evening, the reader may gather somewhat of the manner in which Sophia May was being trained. It need not be enlarged upon. Her parents were making that most reprehensible and fatal mistake of rearing her to be above her station; *above them*. Such mistakes were not so common in those days; but, as the world knows, they are springing into mad fashion now. No training for the working classes can be more pernicious, or is likely to bring forth more disastrous fruits. In Sophia May's case—and hers is a true history—the error was added to by her being allowed the run of those wretched weekly romances. Sophia's parents had married late in life, and were decent, hard-working people; and if they had had the good sense to make their child hard-working too, they would have

given her comfort and content for her portion. Mrs. May had been an inferior servant in a high family, had picked up there some exalted ideas, and the publications she had addicted herself to reading did not tend to sober them. Undoubtedly the child was a pretty, fairy-looking little thing; and a fancied resemblance to one of the aristocratic daughters in the family, where Mrs. May had served, first put ridiculous notions for Sophia into her brain. The father was a more sensible man, but he was so ardently attached to this only child that he too readily fell into the snare, and upon that one point was now as extravagant as his wife. For their station they were in easy circumstances. The man's wages sufficed for their wants, in the humble way they were accustomed to live, Mrs. May had saved money, and Miss Foxaby was ever ready to produce funds to be spent on her pretty niece Sophia. She furnished not only funds but clothes. All the very smart things Sophia flourished in came from her: cast-off relics of the family she served. Strange that the father and mother could not see the incongruity of what they were doing! The child, with her flounces and furbelows, her music and dancing, her pernicious romance-reading, and her fostered vanity; and they, with their household drudgery, living amidst their kettles and saucepans and cooking and cleaning! what an absurdity it all was! She went to a day-school in the neighbourhood, where she mixed with a rather better class of children as to position; indeed the mistress had refused to take her at first on the score that she was the child of servants. There she picked up some learning, and left off some of her idioms. The way in which the child was dressed out on a Sunday was something wonderful to behold. Muslins in summer, satins in winter, streamers of many colours, gaudy artificial flowers, and snow-white feathers!—nearly all of them Miss Foxaby's gifts; and all of them with the first bloom off. In the morning of Sunday, she would be, as the mother expressed it, "in her dirt," watching the preparations for dinner, or exercising the piano, and at one o'clock fetching the beer from the public-house; for May liked to take as much rest as he could get on a Sunday, even from beer fetching. But in the afternoon she was turned out in style, and told to "walk up and down the street, that people might see her"; her father and mother, who on that day would sit at the windows of Mr. Lyvett's room on the first-floor, watching her with looks of love and admiration; the former with his pipe, and his beer in a pewter pot, the latter with her weekly newspaper. Which, however, she could scarcely coax her eyes to read a line of, so absorbed was she with that vision pacing the quiet street in her young vanity, whose long-tailed silken streamers fluttered out behind her, to the amazement of every chance passer-by. They did not go to church; they did not take her. Now and then, indeed, Mrs. May would attend evening service with Sophia; but it was very rarely. They were moral, well-behaved people, the father

and mother, but religion was not known in their house: that is, religious teaching and religious exercises. What did they promise to themselves would be the end of all this, when the child grew up?—that she would be content to continue her abode with them, and live as they did? Where else was she to live? Poor Sophia May! events that really did happen in after life were not so much her fault as the fault of her most foolish parents. And this is a true picture; a simple narrative of events that actually occurred.

CHAPTER II.

HOME FROM FRANCE.

SEVERAL years had gone by. One Thursday night in summer, the quiet street already mentioned (and it was the dulllest and quietest street imaginable after business hours, when the various lawyers and their clerks had deserted it for the night) was aroused from its silence by the echoes of a cab, which came fast down it, and pulled up at the door of Lyvett, Castlerosse, and Lyvett. What could the cab want there at that hour? Plenty of cabs and carriages too, might be seen before the door in the day, but never at night.

"Why, if it's not old May!" exclaimed Miss Jenkins, putting her head out at the next-door window; she and her sister being laundresses to that house, which accommodated several firms. "Where has he been to in a cab? Here, Esther, come and have a look at old May in a cab!"

Miss Esther Jenkins quickly ran to the window: a young lady in a blue veil was following old May out of the cab.

"Well I never!" cried Miss Esther. "Who *can* it be, Martha? There's the gaslight on her face now—what a nice-looking young lady!"

"Why! it must be the daughter come home! Oh, it's nobody but her, you may rely upon it, Esther."

"I'll go in and see what she's like presently, when they are settled a bit," cried Miss Esther. "It's her, safe enough."

"Safe enough" it was. Miss May, who had been for two years to a school on the French coast, had now completed her education, and returned home for good. When Miss Esther Jenkins entered, she found her sitting in the kitchen with her parents. Sophia was eighteen now, and certainly very good-looking. The long curls she had worn as a child, were now twisted in a peculiar way, "French and fashionable," Miss Jenkins called it, round her head. She was above the middle height, and easy in her movements, very much pinched in about the waist, with fine falling shoulders, an admirably fitting dress, and a prodigious deal of pretension. Miss Jenkins stood, taking it all in at a glance and noting various items in her mind, especially the young lady's first

declaration that she did not know how she should get on in London, as she had forgotten her English.

Sophia turned to the place of the old piano. It was there still, and she opened it. She struck a few chords and started back with a scream.

"Mais, c'est horrible, ce piano-là ! Je ne —"

"Do try to speak in English, Sophiar," urged Mrs. May, with tears in her eyes. "How ever shall we get along if you don't? What is it that's the matter? Did you see anything that frightened of you?"

"It is such a—what do you call it in English?—*dreadful* piano. I had as soon have touched an electric battery. It has set all my finest musical nerves on the jar: *ma tête est percée*. I shall never be able to touch it again: *jamais*."

"She has not quite forgot her mother tongue," interposed Miss Jenkins. "Which is a consolation worthy of thanksgiving."

Sophia turned a sharp look upon her. There was a sarcastic ring in the words that she did not like.

"Did you have no English girls whatever at the school, Sophia?" asked Miss Jenkins.

"Mais oui."

"Did you have no English girls whatever at the school?" repeated the visitor, apparently determined to persevere till she got a reply she could understand.

"Some of the young ladies were English."

"And did you never talk together?"

"De temps en temps. Now and then," more hastily added Sophia, perceiving the question was about to be repeated, as before.

"Then it's very singular how you can have forgot it at all," retorted Miss Jenkins, significantly, "for when schoolgirls get together they *do* talk."

The tone brought fire into the temper of Miss May. She cast a look of scorn on the offender, and coolly turned her back upon her.

"It is not agreeable to me to be troubled with strangers to-night," she said, more curtly than politely. "I am tired with my sea-voyage, Miss Jenkins, and the company of my father and mamma is as much as my nerves will support."

"Then I'll make myself scarce," said Miss Jenkins, who was more inclined to laugh than to take offence, "and come in some other time, when you are in company cue, Sophia."

Sophia gave only a cold nod in answer. "How *can* I ever again support the companionship of these wretchedly low people?" ran her thoughts. Miss Jenkins was inwardly making her comments on *her*: tit for tat.

"I say, Esther," whispered Mrs. May, following Miss Jenkins upstairs to fasten the door, "she don't mean no offence; she's only knocked up after the sea-sickness."

"Where no offence is meant, none is took," replied Miss Jenkins. "I know what the little tempers of young folks is. We was young ourselves once."

"But ain't she beautiful?" pleaded Mrs. May. "And such style! Nobody could take her to be anything but the real lady."

"Thorough bred," responded Miss Jenkins. "Good-night."

"Good-night, Esther. "Oh—I say! I wish you'd tell your Martha to beat her mats of a morning towards the house on your t'other side, instead of on this. She's later than I am, and her dust makes my steps and pavement in such a mess. One day Mr. Lyvett asked if I had cleaned them. Good-night."

"I wish 'em joy of her, Martha," were the first words of Miss Jenkins to her sister. "Such an affected, stuck-out fine lady you never saw. What they'll do with her in that kitchen, I can't tell. She wants a saloon and a pair of footmen."

"What can they do with her?" debated Miss Jenkins. "If they've only a kitchen they can't put her in a parlour."

"I don't know. Rely upon it, she'll never reconcile herself to stay there with them."

"She's handsome, is she not, Esther?"

"A handsome face, and a handsome figure. I don't say to the contrary: but she has got an ugly look, if she's put out. I know this: if fortune had blessed me with a daughter, I'd rather see her a female travelling tinker, than I'd bring her up to be a fine lady, not being one myself."

Before the following day was over, Mrs. May awoke to the same fact that Miss Esther Jenkins had only suspected—Sophia would never stay at home with them. Was it likely that she would? She, with her good looks, semi-education, and superficial accomplishments, and her mind formed on Caterpillar's romances!—could her father and mother expect her to make her home in a kitchen, amid kettles and saucepans?

"Your Aunt Foxaby says she can get you a beautiful place as under lady's-maid, Sophia," remarked Mrs. May. "Your French tongue——"

"My Aunt Foxaby says—what? interrupted Sophia, turning round to face her mother. "Get me a place as lady's-maid! Why, do you suppose, or does she suppose, that I would become a servant?"

"But you'd live quite the life of a lady, Sophiar," replied poor Mrs. May. "Them ladies'-maids in a good place mostly does."

"For goodness' sake don't talk nonsense!"

"Well, my dear, I don't see what else you be to do, if you can't reconcile yourself to stay along of us here."

Sunday came. And after dinner Mr. May started to Hyde Park, to fetch his wife's sister, impatient that she should feast her eyes with the improvement in Sophia. Mrs. May began to wash up the dishes, and Sophia ascended to the "Sunday windows," and sat down there.

She held in her hand the weekly newspaper; but she glanced at it discontentedly. The fruits of her education were already beginning to show themselves. She had been discontented ever since she came home. A slight dispute, arising out of her own ill-temper, had occurred the previous day with her mother, in which she had said that the home was no fit home for her, and that the vulgar atmosphere of a kitchen would kill her. Her residence in France had not tended to improve the tone of her mind and heart, however it may have helped her French. She had been to one of the cheap seminaries there: twenty pounds a year, paid quarterly in advance, included everything, from the first day of January to the thirty-first of December. Shrewd Miss Esther Jenkins might have spoken out her opinion of them, had she gone to pass a week in one, as to their eligibility for a girl who was to be "a lady."

Sophia May sat at the first-floor window, feeling very miserable, longing for excitement, vowing that she would not long put up with this, and sullenly glancing over the "*bête*" newspaper. After the beauties of Eugène Sue's novels (which the school had procured en cachette), English literature was tame, even that of a low weekly paper. Suddenly she threw it down with a gesture of impatience; and, dashing open the window, looked from it up the street, wondering how much longer her father and aunt would be.

They were not in sight. Not a soul was in it, save one; on a Sunday it was always particularly empty. This one, who was a foppishly-dressed, though not ungentlemanly-looking young man, was coming down it with a quick step. He halted at the door underneath, and knocked: a thundering knock. Sophia, who had drawn back, peeped out again, and saw a somewhat simple countenance, a moustache that would have been fair had there been enough of it to be seen, light blue eyes, and an eye-glass stuck in one of them.

She would not have answered the door for the world; so poor Mrs. May, who was in the attic with her gown off, had to throw a shawl over her black petticoat and hasten down; but not before a second and third knock had resounded through the house. She dropped a curtsy when she saw who it was.

"Oh, here's somebody at last! I thought you and May were asleep," was the gentleman's salutation.

"I hope you will be so good as to excuse it, sir. May is gone out, and I was up at the top, a-cleaning of myself."

"Have you seen my cigar-case?" demanded the gentleman, entering the front office on the ground-floor. "I must have left it here last night."

"I have not been into the rooms, sir. I don't generally go in till Monday morning."

"I must find it," he resumed, looking about. "I had put some

prime cigars in it, ready for to-day ; and the shops that keep anything worth smoking shut themselves up on a Sunday, and be hanged to them ! You need not wait, Mrs. May. I can let myself out."

"Shall I look in the rooms upstairs, sir ?"

"No, it's not there. It's here if it's anywhere."

Mrs. May retreated aloft ; and the gentleman, after an unsuccessful search, marched upstairs himself, whistling some bars from the last night's opera. But his tune came to an abrupt close ; for on opening the door of his father's room, he found himself, to his extreme astonishment, face to face with a lady.

She had risen at his entrance. A handsome girl, with confident manners, whose fair hair was braided round her head in elaborate twists and turns. Young men are not very competent judges of attire : the eyes of this one only took in the general effect of the lady's dress, and that was splendid. It had once been an evening dress of Miss Foxaby's mistress. He hastily snatched off his hat and dropped his eye-glass.

Who in the world was she ? As to her having any connection with Mrs. May, her dirty shawl and her black petticoat, such an incongruity never would have occurred to him. Though not usually wanting in fluency of speech, it rather failed him now, for he was at a loss how to address her.

"I beg your pardon," he was beginning, but she spoke at the same moment.

"Pardon, monsieur."

Oh, she was French, then ! Had she crossed the Channel in a balloon, and been dropped into the offices of Lyvett, Castlerosse, and Lyvett, by mistake ? How else had she come ? and what did she want there ? He began to recal his French, not a word of which had his tongue ever uttered since leaving school.

"Madame, voulez-vous excuser moi ? Je suis—je trouve," and there he came to a stand-still—what the dickens was "cigar-case" in French ? Fortunately she helped him out.

"I beg to ask your pardon, a thousand pardons, for addressing you in French. I have been so long accustomed to speak only French, and having but since a day or two returned to England, that I forget myself à chaque instant. I fear I am in your way. Shall I retire ?"

"By no means. I will not disturb you for a moment. I am in search of a—small parcel—which I mislaid yesterday."

As he spoke, his eyes fell on the "parcel." It was on the corner of the mantelpiece. At the same moment some vehicle came rattling down the street, turned round, and drew up at the door.

He took a step to the other window and looked from it. Not the one she was at. It was, as he expected, his own cab. He had walked from the chambers of a barrister close by, where he had been lounging

away an hour, and had ordered his groom to follow him. With an elaborate bow (and certainly a respectful one) to the lady, he quitted her presence, descended the staircase, and departed by the front door.

"Again Sophia peeped from the window. She saw him open the "parcel," light a cigar, puff away at it, and step into the cab, which bore the Lyvett crest. The groom ascended to his place, and the smoke went puffing up the street. She had been at no loss to know him after the first moment. It was, in fact, young Mr. Lyvett.

"I wonder who she is, and what she does there?" thought he as he drove onwards. "Don't much think my father would like ——"

The cab stopped. He pulled up the horse so suddenly that its head and fore-legs were jerked into the air. Mr. May and his sister-in-law were just passing down the pavement arm-in-arm, abreast of it.

"Hallo, May! Here."

Mr. May touched his hat, and leaving Miss Foxaby on the pavement, approached the cab, and touched his hat again.

"May! who the deuce is that, down yonder?"

"Sir?" cried Mr. May.

"Who's that lady in my father's private room?"

"I don't know who's there, sir," answered Mr. May. For it really did not occur to him that the gentleman present would not know his daughter. "You don't mean my wife, or my ——"

"Your wife!" impetuously interrupted the young man, giving an admonishing touch to his impatient horse. "What else will you ask me if I know? There's a lady there, I tell you. As handsome a girl as ever I saw."

Recollection dawned upon the porter. "With light hair, sir, and coral beads in it, and a green-and-gold-looking dress on?"

"Green-and-gold for all I know. Something dazzling. She speaks French."

"It is Sophiar, sir."

"Eh? Who?"

"Our daughter, sir. She came home last Thursday. She has been finishing of her edication in France at a French school."

The gentleman stared for a few moments at Mr. May, as if unable to understand him. Then returned his cigar to his lips, nodded slightly, shook the reins, and was whirled round the corner on his way to his father's residence in the West-end square, where he dwelt.

"I'm sure I should think it's the first time any of 'em has come down on a Sunday," observed May to his sister-in-law as they walked on. "There's Sophiar a-leaning out of the window."

Miss Foxaby rushed in, and up the stairs, to clasp her niece in her arms.

"Oh my goodness heart, Sophia! how beautiful you do look! Well, if ever I saw anybody so much improved in all my life!"

"I am grown, am I not, Aunt Foxaby?"

"Grown lovely, child. Ah, and somebody else thinks so: I could see it. Only think of his asking May who you were! Somebody we met in this street with his cab and groom, all so stylish!"

"Who was that gentleman, father?" inquired Sophia. "I forgot myself as usual, and addressed him in French."

"Why, Sophiar, you don't mean to say as you've forgot him, as well as your English?" cried the wondering father, who took all his daughter's airs to be genuine. "It was young Mr. Lyvett."

"That it was a Lyvett I could see by the features; but I thought I should have remembered young Lyvett well. A haughty fellow with black eyebrows, he used to be, who looked down upon everybody."

"Sophiar's thinking of the eldest son," interposed Mrs. May, who was now attired for the afternoon. "This one is Mr. Fred. He was articled to a firm in the country, Sophiar, some house in a different branch of law business, and was never much here until lately. No wonder you didn't remember him. But he is twenty-one now, and has come back for good. They do say he's to have a share in the business by-and-by, the same as his eldest brother have got. Mr. Fred is ten times nicer to speak to than Mr. James. He haven't got that proud way with him. Of course he's a deal younger."

"Ten years younger, I should say," remarked Sophia.

"Well, and I should think he is. Mr. Fred's not much more than a boy yet. Mr. James seemed older at sixteen than he do at twenty-one."

"He came after his cigars," said Mrs. May. "He said he left 'em behind him yesterday. Leastways, the case."

"Sophia had better look out," cried Miss Foxaby, with a knowing nod. "Stranger things have happened. My dear, he said you were the handsomest girl he ever saw. And he took you for a real lady."

"Who said it?" asked Sophia, quickly.

"Mr. Fred Lyvett."

"I could see he was struck with me," thought Sophia to herself. "But, ma foi, where's the use of that? He is a Lyvett."

Retiring to the kitchen for tea, Sophia's future prospects were discussed. Aunt Foxaby led to it by observing that Sophia, with her figure, and her air, and her French, might command any situation she pleased as lady's own attendant, even to Royalty she might almost aspire; and that all she would have to learn now was a little hair-dressing—dress-making would come to her "spontaneous." Sophia's answer to this startled Aunt Foxaby, and nearly sent May off his chair. She meant to be a lady herself, she said, not maid to one; she was a lady already; and she asked what they meant by putting so great an indignity upon her, even in idea. It was very unexpected; and with one tacit consent the subject was allowed to drop.

(To be continued.)

CHRISTMAS EVE.

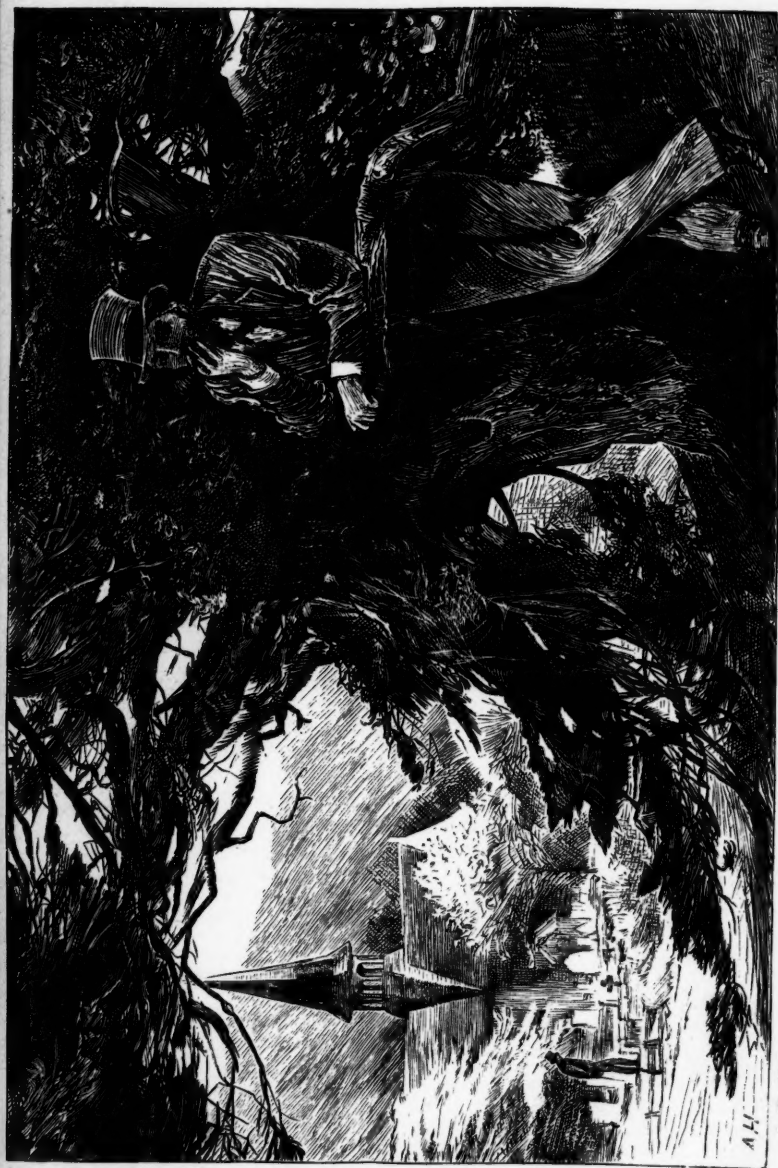
To you, dear friend,
 Whose tender sympathy is ne'er denied,
 Whose loving heart my own would never grieve,
 Whose hand so often is my patient guide,
 I send a greeting on this Christmas Eve.
 Only a greeting ; but a wish sometimes
 Is worth the gift another might bestow ;
 And you remembering who penned the rhymes
 Will welcome them right lovingly, I know.
 We'll woo the shadows while the hearth is bright,
 And have a twilight reverie to-night.

O do you hear the chimes—the bells at play—
 That tell the same sweet story every year ?
 I used to think that every note was gay—
 'Tis only children fancy so, I fear.
 And they know not—how should they, who are young—
 That in the merry peal *one* solemn bell
 Is that which often, with an iron tongue,
 Rings out for loved and loving ones a knell.
 But we can recognise the sound again,
 And with the pleasure comes a dash of pain.

Nay, that's too dark a thought for Christmas Eve,
 When all should banish sorrow and be glad ;
 We'll let it pass, and brighter fancies weave,
 For all the bells, thank Heaven, are not sad :
 There are the marriage bells which gaily ring,
 And those, which sweetly summon us to prayer.
 These happier echoes touch another string,
 And whisper love and hope, forgetting care.
 The carol singers, too—hark ! now again
 Comes the soft music of their joyous strain.

At festival of Yule, old legends say,
 Good spirits are abroad ; 'tis doubtless true.
 I like the quaint conceit, and therefore pray
 The Christmas Angels may be guarding you.
 And now good night ; the shadows on the wall
 Have danced themselves to sleep ; the fire burns low ;
 Without, all silently the moonbeams fall,
 Just as, perchance, they fell long long ago,
 On that first Christmas Eve, whose memory bright
 We cherish yet. And so once more, Good Night !

S. E. G.



J. SWAIN.

IN THE CHURCHYARD.

A. HOPKINS.